

## Ericksonian Hypnotic Language Patterns

Douglas O'Brien

**Pattern 6. Tag Questions** are little questions added on to the end of a statement that change it into a question. They are also referred to as “tie downs.” Tag Questions are similar to pattern #4, the “Resistance Dodge,” but different.

Rather than dodging resistance, with tag questions you are endeavoring to get agreement, are you not?

They soften a statement into a question, don't they?

They can be very useful, or they can be overdone and obnoxious, can they not?

**Tonality** is again a huge component in the same way we talked in newsletter #1, “Patterns of Indirect Suggestion.” If you lift the pitch of your voice at the end of the sentence, it is heard as a question. Of course it is a question, I know, but it is *responded to* as a question, meaning the person tends to go inside their mind and search around to find whether they agree or not. Conversely, if you drop your voice pitch toward the end of the sentence, it is responded to as a command. The listener will tend to simply agree. Say the above examples first with the question tonal shift up and then with the command tone down. Notice the difference.

Please note that there are times when you want the question effect and other times when you want the command effect. Notice what happens in your own mind when you hear them in the different ways. Imagine when and how those differences will be useful.

In the following example how I begin by pacing the client's experience, use a tag questions to shift the time frame of the client's issue from the present to the past... and then utilize tag questions to shift the focus:

"Yes, that is a terrible problem, wasn't it? It's nice to be getting some distance from it, haven't you?"

Many people enjoy changing the time frame from present to the past, or past to future, etc, haven't they? Won't you?

Now, **write your own examples.** The best way to learn is by doing. Write them out. Practice. Say them aloud to a human being with the proper tonal shift.

Write at least ten and then use them. Use them on salesmen, use them on your children, use them with clients or your boss. Just **go out there and use them!** See for yourself. And remember, when you use them you own them.

Have fun. See you next week.