

# Safer, Easier Childbirth—

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obstetricians probably have less trouble winning patients' trust than most specialists.

## How do you instruct your patients, Doctor?

We hold weekly group sessions—partly for economy, partly to speed the rate of learning by "cross-pollination," so to speak. I not only invite the husbands, I urge them to attend the first session with their wives.

Having the husbands there serves two purposes: (1) it cuts down and usually eliminates husbandly antagonism to the idea

of the wife "submitting" to hypnotism, and (2) it helps us prove to the woman that she really was hypnotized. The eyewitness husbands always gladly bear this out.

There are various devices for inducing hypnotism—lights, oscillation of bright objects, eye fixation—but I prefer to depend on voice and reason, using a monotonous tone and gentle repetition of permissive phrases ("you may notice," "you may allow," "you may want," etc.). That this is adequate I have proved time and again by inducing hypnosis in my group *with my back to them*.

## Has hypnosis ever let you down?

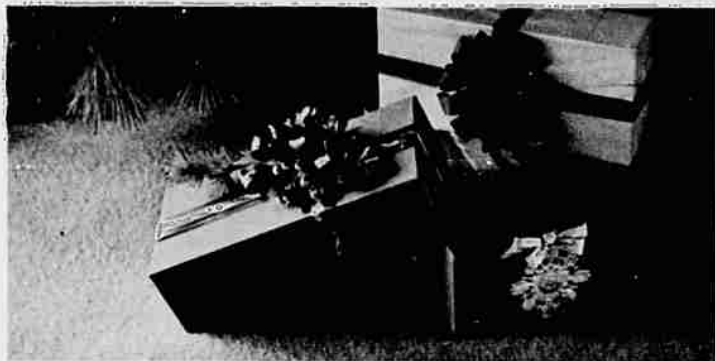
No, but an occasional patient has been unable to achieve it (often because friends or relatives undermined her confidence). When that once-in-a-blue-moon patient reneges

in the delivery room, we always have chemoanesthesia to fall back on. But it seldom has been necessary.

## How do you fix the patient's attention elsewhere during pain?

We encourage her to hallucinate past pleasant experiences or even imaginary future events. And we accompany her every step of the way in order to enlist her active help when we need it.

Travel is an especially valuable hallucination because it creates flexibility in time relationships. It also permits bringing the husband into the patient's mental picture. I had one patient hallucinate a drive to Detroit for six hours during a prolonged labor, then easily had her compress the return trip into 20 minutes for actual delivery. En route, we



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