

Lifestyle & Culture

COMEDIENNE'S HYPNOTIC STAGE FRIGHT CURE

Joining comedy production company Maltese Funny Business seemed like a dream come true for Santa Venera-based **Tanya Phillips**.

Writing comedy and jokes has always proved easy for this confident, intelligent, former financial services broker, who boasts two Masters degrees in English Literature and Entrepreneurship; it was only when she took to the stage to perform, that the dream turned into her worst nightmare as Tanya was struck by stage fright in a way she would never have thought possible.

"Everyone gets nervous before they go on stage but once the performance starts it goes. That didn't happen to me. I was convinced I felt hostility from the audience and that they wanted me to trip up.

"I would go on stage and my mind would go blank, sweat would pour down the microphone as my hand held it in a vice-like grip. My whole body was shaking and my voice and my mouth would go completely dry.

"I would have palpitations and I'd forget half my jokes, which was such a shame as I'd put a lot of effort into writing them," she said.

Tanya, who performs under the stage name Tanya Malta, admits that she would have quit if it wasn't for the man behind Maltese Funny Business, Paul Pennington, who suggested she saw a respected hypnotherapist he knew, as she explained.

"Paul was enormously supportive and after my third stage performance, he recommended I see UK-based hypnotherapist, Catherine Paterson, who was able to deliver a two-hour session over Skype.

"I was hugely sceptical as I thought I was such an extreme

case I was beyond help. But I decided to give it a go.

"Catherine put me in a trance-like state, a bit like that moment before you fall asleep and used visualisations to help me go back in time to my childhood.

I was worried that nothing would come up but it was strange how certain images popped up in my mind. It is not a process you can control but your brain will make the right things present themselves.

"What came to me was an incident that happened when I was around 10, which I had completely forgotten about. I had got blamed and chastised by my grandmother for something she knew I hadn't done, she knew someone else had done it. It was all down to family politics.

"After that, I felt I had been unfairly treated by grown-ups and I lived with a sense of inadequacy as a result. It got worse as I got older and I was crippled with anxiety and low self-esteem.

"While I was in the trance, Catherine got me to be my current self - looking at my younger self and tell her what she wanted to hear, then imagine what my older self would say to me now, thereby replacing the negative voice with a kinder, older, wiser one. It wasn't easy because tapping into stuff from the past, which you've forgotten, can be painful and shocking. But Catherine was very caring and gave me permission to drop everyone's baggage, which was very powerful."

She added: "I came out of the session feeling a massive sense of liberation as though a weight had been lifted off my shoulders and, as a result not only has my stage fright disappeared but I've gained more confidence in all aspects of my life.

"I am now happy to see what life throws at me and would never have left my job as a broker if I hadn't gone through that powerful experience. And when I'm on stage now I feel warmth from the audience and very comfortable, as if I am walking into a roomful of friends. I now feel people are on my side, not the enemy anymore. It's miraculous!"

Catherine, a performance specialist and clinical hypnotherapist, practices a new form of hypnotherapy called Rapid Transformational Therapy (RTT) which, as the name suggests, works quickly to remove outdated belief systems and traumas that stop the individual from moving forward.

Stage fright and fear of public speaking are two of the common phobias in the western world affecting three out of four people and, according to Catherine, it is



Tanya Phillips

all about being judged.

"Being looked at by a large group we sense our own vulnerability and experience an irrational fear of being judged, which can be paralyzing. Thoughts arise such as, 'What if I'm not good enough?' 'What

will people think of me?'

"I act as a detective, daisy chaining events to work out the root causes of their anxiety. The cause is often hidden from our logical minds but when you are in a hypnotic state your mind clicks like a light bulb into a re-

alization of what the cause of the issue is. I worked with Tanya unwrapping and detangling her past experiences on and off stage. When she clicked, realized the unconscious, destructive patterns, everything fell into place and the results were outstanding."

Pennington could not agree more. "As both a communications coach and comedy producer developing new comics here in Malta, I come across stage fright a lot and Tanya is a case in point - in our writers workshops and rehearsals she demonstrated what a very talented writer and gifted comedienne she is, then she'd go in front of an audience and the stage fright took over and people only got to see glimpses of her potential.

"She's a much-loved member of our team and when traditional approaches to assist overcome her stage fright proved unsuccessful, I turned to Catherine, as I knew of her work and I'm so glad that I did.

"The difference that Catherine has made is quite simply astonishing. Free of the fears that had affected her on stage I'm really excited to see where Tanya might go as a writer/performer. I can't wait for audiences here to see the real Tanya and I will be forever grateful to Catherine."

Tanya will be performing with the Maltese Funny Business Comedy Company featuring US award-winning comedian Sid Singh on Saturday, 27 October at 8.30pm as part of Spazju Kreattiv's programme at St James Cavalier in Valletta.

Tickets are €10, available via www.kreattivita.org or through the Box Office on 2122 3200.



Catherine Paterson




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NCPE CALL FOR TENDERS

As part of the project 820451 – *Prepare the Ground for Economic Independence* – the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality is requesting submissions for the provision of:

REFERENCE: DT-NCPE/02/2018
TENDER TITLE: Service Tender for the Provision of Venues and Refreshments coming at least partially from organic sources for the project 'Prepare the Ground for Economic Independence'

Any queries should be sent through e-PPS by not later than **Thursday, 1st November, 2018 at 4.00p.m. CET** specifying the **publication reference** and the **tender title**. A **clarification meeting** will be held on **Friday, 26th October, 2018 at 10.00a.m. CET** at NCPE premises. **Closing date** for submission of tenders is **Friday, 9th November, 2018 at 9.30a.m. CET**. **All submissions should be carried out on the e-PPS**
<https://www.etenders.gov.mt/epps/home.do>

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Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020
 Project part-financed by the European Union
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