

HYPNOSIS MASTERS



SERIES

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Experiences That Have Never Existed Before!*



Hypnosis Master – Stephen Gilligan

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Hypnosis Master – Stephen Gilligan

Welcome

Welcome To The Hypnosis Masters Series

In this series, you will be getting interviews and special seminars from some of the world's best Masters of Hypnosis. Each Master Hypnotist is a specialist in one particular field and will be revealing his or her hypnosis secrets for you.

Meet This Month's Master: Stephen Gilligan



Stephen Gilligan began his studies in hypnotherapy with the legendary Dr Milton H. Erickson, M.D. when he was just 19 years old.

He stayed with Erickson during the last 5 years of his life and absorbed Erickson's model of hypnosis when it was at its most highly evolved state.

Stephen turned his experiences and insights with Milton Erickson to good use. He began to practice as a hypnotherapist and developed a unique new approach to using trance states for peak performance, personal growth and healing.

Stephen's work is now characterised by the development of a unique type of trance he calls the “generative trance.”

A generative trance is a unique state that allows you to create experiences and abilities that have never existed before, either for the individual or even in the world at large. Stephen now teaches therapists and other hypnotists how to create, shape and use these generative trances to empower themselves and/or their clients.

Stephen's website is: www.StephenGilligan.com

Introduction

Welcome to StreetHypnosis.com. My name is Igor Ledochowski, and what you're about to hear is a very special interview with Master Hypnotist Stephen Gilligan that he did for us at the Private Hypnosis Club as part of our Interviews With the Hypnosis Masters Series.

As you will hear, Stephen is a Master of Ericksonian hypnosis. He has developed a unique system, a method, to develop special generative trances that will allow you to heal or into truly empowering states of being, states in which people can become more than they ever were.

Listen on at the end of the Interview to discover how to get your hands on a three-hour seminar revealing his astonishing generative trance system.

Hypnosis Master – Stephen Gilligan

Interview – Part 1

Igor: Welcome to StreetHypnosis.com. My name is Igor Ledochowski and I'm here with Master Hypnotist Stephen Gilligan for our Interview with a Hypnosis Master Series.

Stephen Gilligan is, of course, from StephenGilligan.com, and I'm very excited to have Stephen on the grounds here, because he's one of those true Masters of his craft. He studied with Milton Erickson, the legend. He was one of his protégés in many ways and has since taken his work in some very interesting directions, which he's going to be sharing with us today.

First, let me start by welcoming you on board, Stephen. Thank you so much for being here with us.

Stephen: My pleasure, Igor. It's nice to be here.

Igor: One of the first things that we like to ask people during these Interviews, and particularly people are fascinated about this when finding their own first steps on the process to hypnosis mastery is how the big names, the people who actually made it, how they began.

◆ **Could you tell us a little about how you first got involved with hypnosis, your first exposure, your first experiences with it?**

Stephen: That's an interesting question because, as we'll see in the interview, I consider trance as something that's very natural that's in many different parts of life. So I would say that I discovered trance very early in my life from growing up in an Irish Catholic alcoholic violent family.

Some would say that's redundant. I would say it was a place where there was a lot of deep trance, negative trance to be sure, but I think I spent a large part of my life sort of off in other worlds because it wasn't safe to be in this world, if you will.

I got to meet Milton Erickson when I was a wee lad of 19. That was in 1974. I was an undergraduate at UC, Santa Cruz. I was studying with Bandler and Grinder and with Gregory Bateson and through Bateson's connection and Bandler and Grinder were introduced to Milton Erickson.

The second time they went back to see him, which was a couple of months after they first went, they brought me along. I met him when I was 19 and it was an instant love affair.

Igor: Wow. It must have been pretty inspiring, especially at such an early age, to meet such a, shall we say, intensely charismatic person.

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Stephen: It was amazing. I think that as I was sort of a confused, but very motivated young man, I had dropped out of college for a year and had just come back. I was completely open. When I met this guy, it touched something so deeply inside of me. It was like there was a fire that was lit in my soul and despite various efforts over the years to put it out, the darn thing just won't go out.

Igor: One of the stories that I heard when first getting into the field of hypnosis, Ericksonian, NLP and all that sort of stuff myself, and it's one that hopefully you'll share some insights with us, is the old legend of how Grinder and Bandler used to like doing their experiments. One of them included yourself in a deep trance identification with Erickson.

◆ **Could you tell us when that happened was that before or after Erickson?**

- ✓ How did that affect you?
- ✓ How did you experience that?

Stephen: It happened actually before I first met Erickson. There are a lot of stories that go around about that, but here's the truth. It was a time in Santa Cruz during the mid-'70s. There were all sorts of interesting stuff going on. There was a small group of about 10 or 12 of us hanging out with Bandler and Grinder on campus at UC Santa Cruz.

We were doing all these wild experiments in consciousness, which is a term that I often use to describe trance. Every time it's an experiment in just what is possible in consciousness. Somebody had been reading some hypnosis journals and came across the articles by a Russian psychologist named Rieckhoff on this process called 'deep trance identification'.

In the articles, he talked about how he did these experiments of having subjects deep trance identify with famous painters, like Rembrandt or somebody, and then would have them in a trance as Rembrandt do paintings and found out that the quality of their paintings was superior to when they were not in a trance or not in the identification.

Well, we thought this was very interesting beyond painting, and naturally the question came up, could we do it other ways? I thought it would be a great idea to do a deep trance identification as Milton Erickson. So with the help of Grinder and Bandler, I went ahead and did that.

Igor:

◆ **How was it?**

- ✓ What was it like to actually be Erickson?

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- ✓ Do you actually remember it or was it more that people told you afterwards?

Stephen: I remember it very vividly. The first time we did it, we were up at Richard Bandler's house. I think Grinder did some sort of hypnotic induction, and as I was eluding to with my childhood experiences, I was always very eager to go into all sorts of different deep trances.

So he suggested I go into this state that Erickson calls the middle of nowhere and set aside my normal personality and take on the personality in a trance of Milton Erickson. I did that, and it was an amazing experience. Actually, when I opened my eyes, two things happened that were very, very unpredictable.

The first was everything was totally quiet inside of me.

Igor: Wow!

Stephen: Before I had done that, I had thought that Erickson's mind was just buzzing with all of this clever activity and that he was, in effect, the fastest gun in the West, but everything was quiet. There was no internal dialog whatsoever.

The second that was very interesting was that I could see that everybody was already in a trance. So I didn't have to put them into a trance, I just had to sort of let the conscious mind walls fall away so that they could know what a deep trance they were already in.

Those two experiences, I think, were extraordinarily significant in my development of understanding how to do hypnotic work.

Igor: That must have been actually a powerful insight to have as a novice hypnotist because normally it takes people years of experience to get to that point, if they even ever do. Whereas you actually started from that starting point where you actually had a sense that everyone is in trance, it's just a question of tweaking conditions for the right kind of trance to emerge.

Stephen: That's right and, of course, that's a key point of Erickson's naturalistic approach, which makes it different from traditional hypnosis, which is trance is an artifact of hypnotic suggestion. So you only can go into trance if you have a hypnotist, and the hypnotist has to say deeper- deeper- deeper.

One of the revolutionary ideas of Erickson was that a trance is in the fabric of consciousness. It's already there. So rather than having to create it in a person, you're eliciting what's already there, and incidentally in that regard, he said it would probably be a helpful experience.

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I think if you want to know anything about how to use trance, you should always use yourself as the first subject. Only to the extent that you can know it from within will you feel a genuine confidence in being able to work with it all around you.

Igor: I think that's an important point. If you don't mind, I want to emphasize this a bit. In particular, those people who have been part of our clubs and our students, we emphasize the general idea of going first, where you as a hypnotist have the experiences, because then when you bring people to those experiences, you know what it is you're talking about.

Rather than just trying to guess what experiences they'll have, you'll go, I know the kind of trance where you talk too much to yourself. I know the kind of trance where you have doubt. I also know the kind of trance where everything's calm and quiet inside and you feel great.

By mapping out your own experiences as a hypnotist it gives you instantly, the right vocabulary, the right range and the right kind of sympathy or empathy with your client, that allows you to read where they are. Then, to know what kind of maneuvers are likely to help you get them to where you need them to be going to.

◆ Is that what you find yourself, as well?

Stephen: You're preaching to the choir, brother. Yes, absolutely, and another way of thinking about that is you're looking to – and it's something we can talk more about later on in the Interview – you're looking to go into trance and create a trance field, if you will. Then, gently see how you can be able to lower somebody into it and that's a different way of proceeding, then thinking you're some observer outside of the person and outside of trance.

Igor: Right. It must take away a lot of performance anxiety as well because rather than having to perform and get it right the first time without evening knowing what materials you have to work with, it's more a question of finding how, well, what do we have to work with, and then that will tell me which way to go.

Stephen: You're right. I've been training people for over 30 years and see one of the biggest obstacles that people have is having the confidence to go ahead and do it. A lot of times people say, okay, I'm really going to do it this time and they end up just talking with the person. Sometimes it's awkward to introduce trance if you're not comfortably inside of it already.

Of course, it brings up the question, how do you do that in a way that you could also honor whatever social role that you're playing?

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Igor: That's a very important part, isn't it? Otherwise, you just become a hypno-weirdo, which can be fine in a limited context but isn't really the most appropriate way of doing it.

Stephen: Of course not, and it brings up with idea that there are so many different kinds of trance, both positive and negative, but there are also different types of trances, some in which you're internally-oriented, some in which you're externally-oriented. Obviously, when you're doing hypnotic work, you're externally-oriented and you're tuned to how to create positive trances.

Igor: This is something that I actually learned from you originally, and I've been emphasizing it a lot with my students. I'd love, for you to elaborate a little bit on this idea – this externally-oriented trance. I call it the hypnotist's trance, where you are in as deep a trance as your client, it's just that your eyes happen to be open and your mouth happens to be able to speak.

◆ **Can you talk a little bit about how that experience is for you and why you think it helps you as a hypnotist do better work?**

Stephen: Well again traditionally, the idea is you have to close your eyes to go into trance or it's something that's inside of you. In any generative approach, we see that the unconscious is not just inside of you, it's all around you. It's in the field, if you will.

Anybody that does a high performance art, whether it's an athlete or a musician or a great speaker, of course, is somebody who is able to tune in with their creative intelligence to the world all around them. So we see that as a type of very creative trance, and that's precisely the sort of externally-oriented creative trance that somebody doing hypnotic work needs to be able to be comfortable in.

Igor: We're going to come onto this idea a little bit more fully later on this Interview when we talk about your, for want of a better word, your hypnotic philosophy.

Before we go down that road, though, I know that you have a wealth of fascinating stories of crazy things you've done yourself and that you've experienced with Milton Erickson in terms of things that he was doing with other people.

◆ **Could you kind of take us on through a little whirlwind tour of what it's like to kind of grow up learning from the big man Erickson himself?**

✓ What kind of interesting stunts did you experience?

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✓ What kind of lessons did you draw out of that?

Stephen: Well, I think the lesson that I drew out of it is that every moment is an amazing experiment in consciousness. We have the capacity to be able to create an infinite variety of different realities. Unfortunately, we usually don't take advantage of it, we just sort of fall into the trance that's been created for us.

What we're looking to do in trance is discover that we're the hypnotist, that we're the ones that create realities, and to do that you have to be able to let go of any fixed ways of thinking or fixed ways of being. That's what Erickson was just absolutely amazing at.

He operated in a lot of different ways. One of the ways that was very unique to him, he was sort of like a Yoda from Star Wars. He was a classic trickster. He really liked to play in many different ways. So anytime that a student particularly, and patients also, would get too rigid or too serious, he'd usually pull the rug in some way from them.

I have a good friend, a colleague who was studying with him. This guy went over to meet Erickson with one of the Erickson's daughters. His daughter was bringing him over to meet Dr. Erickson at a family party. Erickson, as you know, was mostly paralyzed as an old man.

They went to the house, and the daughter walked in before this friend and the whole family saw her and ran over and she forgot that her friend was there. Erickson's chair was right next to the front door. He was seated in it faced away towards the room, and instantly my friend was very nervous. Here's the great Dr. Erickson.

Igor: Of course.

Stephen: He thought that Erickson was beginning to turn his head towards him, and so he stuck out his hand in anticipation, and then, oh, I guess not. Erickson wasn't turning that way. Then he thought that Erickson was beginning to turn his way again, and so he stuck out his hand again, but no, it didn't happen. Finally, the daughter realized that she has completely forgotten my friend and she came over and said I'm so sorry. She said daddy, here's this guy that I told you about.

My friend realized that now he's really going to turn to me, and he stuck out his hand. Erickson dropped his head down and began an ideomotoric jerk movement of his head very, very slowly. My friend thought it was about 10 minutes of clock time, but he completely lost track of time. His hand was cataleptically extended out.

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Finally, Erickson's eyes met his and Erickson said you're rigid. Of course, this guy was completely cataleptically rigid. Erickson said I'll meet you in the office at 10:00 sharp in the morning, and began a process of ideomotorically, slowing moving his head back towards his original position.

My friend thinks that took about 10 minutes, but he really doesn't know. They led the poor guy out and put him in a taxi. He shows up the next morning. He's in Erickson's office. Erickson gets wheeled out. He looks at this guy and says, the first rule for doing hypnosis is you can't afford to be rigid. Thus began the education of this fellow.

Igor: That's a marvelous story.

Stephen: It's funny, but you also hear the teaching lesson in it.

Igor: Well, yes. I find it fascinating.

Stephen: One of the major differences between a creative trance and what we call the normal ego intellect, or in hypnosis what we call the conscious mind, that the creative unconscious needs to have this fluidity. It can't rigidly attach to any position. It needs to be able to dance, to sing, to play music, to be able to hold multiple viewpoints, to be able to flow and so forth. So if you're going to be able to work creatively with hypnosis, it starts with you.

Igor: I think that's also a nice illustration there of how that very principle you're talking about, this idea of being free in your own mind as a hypnotist to be able to be more creative. It suddenly gives you these wonderful hypnotic gifts.

For example, no one can plan ahead of time to create catalepsy this way. So when he says you're rigid, it's actually a double entendre, isn't it? It's like physically you're rigid, but it's also talking about him being emotionally or psychologically rigid as well.

That kind of encapsulates his, I think people call it the multilevel approach to hypnosis, but it all comes not from planning, but rather from being spontaneous and in that altered state of consciousness, which allows you to capture the moment and recognize it for what it is.

Stephen: I think so. Another thing that Erickson would typically say is that people come to see you for change because they're rigid. That they have become rigid in some way of thinking or some way of acting in some important area of their life and your job is to help them get un-rigid.

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So that's what we see trance as, as a way to relax and not hold your version of reality so rigidly, so that you can begin to explore how to create identity in a different way. Again, to do that effectively, it starts with you as the hypnotist.

Igor: Now this reminds me of a story that you told in your book, *Therapeutic Trances*, which takes this same idea to the next step, which is you have this concept of there are many different types of trances. You started today's Interview by telling us how you went through all kinds of deep, but negative, trances growing up, and then Erickson became a source of positive reshaping trances for you while relatively young in your process as a hypnotist and development as a person.

I recall a story that you told and perhaps you can tell it to us with your own individual style, where you went into this state where you thought you knew it all. You thought it was all about stories and then, of course, Erickson catches your new-formed rigidity but at a higher level and in class Ericksonian, trickster style, tricks you into a more free-flowing trance using the very rigidity you're beginning to develop by accident.

I don't know if you recall that story, but if you do, could you tell us that story again, because I think it's charming and truly illustrates that point of being flexible beautifully, I think.

Stephen: Well, I think the story you're referring to that is in the *Therapeutic Trances* book was the one where I think I was 20 years old, and this was the early days of NLP. One of the ideas then was that everything could be modeled, and once you had a model that anybody could then be able to replicate the behavior of the model.

The modeling tools were pretty basic and they especially consisted of organizing things in terms of the three representational systems of visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

I went to see Erickson and I said Dr. Erickson, I'd like to ask you some questions about how you work. He said go right ahead. I had my paper and my pencil. I said, when you work with people do you have a lot of internal dialog? He said no. So I wrote down on my paper no. No internal dialog.

I said okay, do you make a lot of pictures? He said no. So I wrote down no pictures. Oh, he must have a lot of kinesthetic sensations. I said do you feel a lot in your body? He said no. I wrote down no, and then I realized that in a panic, I was at the end of my known world. I was like one of those sailors who are ready to sail off the edge of the Earth because at that point, nothing existed beyond those three representation systems.

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I said what do you do? He said – this is one of his favorite lines, both when he said it and he was so happy when anybody else said it – he said I don't know. So I would write down, he doesn't know. He said all I know is that I've got an unconscious mind and they have an unconscious mind, and we're both sitting in the room together. Therefore, trance is inevitable. So I wrote down, trance is... I didn't even finish it.

He said I don't know how you will go into a trance, I don't know when you will go into a trance, I don't know why you will go into a trance. All I know is that our unconscious minds are sitting in the same room together and, therefore, trance is inevitable, and I'm so interesting and curious to discovery just how you will now go into a trance. Then he paused and he said I know that sounds ridiculous, but it works. So I wrote down on my paper, it works!

So he really encouraged what he called trusting the unconscious. It's one of those phrases that means so many different things at many different levels that it's typically very misunderstood. It is a disciplined art to be able to trust your unconscious, so it's not simply a process of just passing out and thinking the all mighty unconscious will do everything. It's learning, like any artist, how to be able to discipline yourself to tune into something beyond your ego intellect, and then to be able to trust it, to receive it while you stay present as it guides you. That's what he did.

Igor: This is a little bit of a foreshadowing of what is now a signature or hallmark of your work. This idea of generative trances, which is just trust your unconscious mind, which is great as an idea, but how do you do it? You actually have mapped out that process of learning to rebuild that relationship in a very meticulous, sort of methodical sort of way so people can really go through this experiential journey of connecting in, communicating, learning to trust.

So, there's not just the question of if only I could just turn my conscious mind off, all would be well or, if only I could force my unconscious mind to do it this way all would be well? It's actually more a question of planting seeds, letting them grow and creating the right atmosphere for it all to happen.

Stephen: Absolutely. This is a fundamentally different way of thinking about trance and approaching trance. The traditional way is to sort of knock somebody's conscious mind out and then program their unconscious. I think this is very unhelpful on a number of counts.

What the Ericksonian approach is looking to do is something that I've tried to elaborate on over the past 30 to 40 years is this sense of, as you were saying, how do you technically create that state in yourself as a hypnotist?

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Then, how do you technically create the state in your subject so that they can tune into their unconscious, and they can trust it to be able to help them and guide them to create things beyond their wildest dreams.

It's a different approach than thinking the unconscious has to be programmed. But rather, the unconscious has to be attuned at this high level so that it can operate in your life in an intelligent way. The question, of course, is how do you do that technically. You're right, that's a big part of what I've tried to focus on.

Igor: This is something which, again, when we get into the Seminar portion of this Interview series, you're going to give us some glimpses and experiences of, which I'm very excited to get to.

Before we get down that road, because these Interviews with a Master Series are to give people a sense of how to take the path to mastery themselves.

- ◆ **Could you give us a sense of how you got started actually doing your own practice and how these themes began to evolve for you, so that you sort of developed its own rhythm, your own style and your own way of viewing hypnosis and your hypnotic work?**

Stephen: Well, I would first say that maybe you know this research, which is interesting that shows that for anybody to become a true master in their field, it takes a minimum of 10,000 hours of practice.

Igor: Yeah.

Stephen: Very interesting. Malcolm Gladwell in his most recent book, *Outliers*, goes through that research. So, if you want to do it, you have to saturate every part of your consciousness in it. I think that's the way to do it. When I was learning, it was an interesting time. I was at the University at Santa Cruz, but I was with a group and that's what we did for 8-10 hours a day.

I lived with a group of guys and we actually had a house that we rented wired for sound, and we had Milton Erickson tapes going on all the time, it was a little disconcerting to some people that we had over.

I would just try to practice trance with myself in every possible way. I tried to experience trance in every conceivable situation. I tried to practice trance with others in every possible way. When I was a student, I would walk around with this very big book that had these big bold letters HYPNOSIS. Wherever I would go, I would have that book tucked under my arm with the word HYPNOSIS prominently displayed.

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You can imagine how many people at checkout counters or whatever when they see the word hypnosis and you're holding a book, they say do you do anything about hypnosis? I'd say, actually I'm doing these little experiments, if you'd like to volunteer.

I went home and hypnotized every member of my family. That was a very interesting experience.

Igor: Of course.

Stephen: I just wanted to get a feel that trance can and should be experienced in all sorts of different ways so it really becomes part of your unconscious.

Igor: Now I'd like to draw a little point out from what you've been saying there, which I think is very important and I'd really like to emphasize people to take home with them, which is the *Outliers* book and the all the research about 10,000 of practice makes the Master.

In terms of timing, if you're willing to practice say 5-10 hours a day that would be 3-6 years of solid continuous practice, which is, of course, a lot. You don't need to have as much as that to be an expert hypnotist, but for true mastery, it goes there.

There's one other thing that's important, which you just mentioned in passing a few times, which is it's not just about practice and picking up a book and reading the same induction 10,000 times. It's about the kind of practice - the quality you imbue into your practice will be the quality that your mastery will have as well. So, if all you do is one induction for 10 years, you'll probably be very good at that induction, but at very little else.

Whereas, what you're suggesting here is the idea of experimenting, exploring, expanding, trying things out, seeing whether it would "fail," but really what you're doing is you're finding out what emerges instead. Those maneuvers kind of give you a map of the inside of the mind. It's like a mental sailor's map of the different states you can navigate through and the little experiences you can have for people and how to reach them.

That's kind of an important part, if I understand you correctly, of your path to mastery. It's really emphasizing that creative element, that explorative element versus the rigid here are five inductions, get rid of them, kind of approach.

Stephen: Yes. I would also just point out that everybody's got their own learning style. Of all the Ericksonians, I tend to be the most process-oriented, I would say. I think most people would agree the most unstructured. I tend to work best that way.

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Other people may find that they do their best work in a more structured way. I think there's room for a lot of different styles. The point is that you need to feel it in your bones. You need to feel it in your breath. You need to be able to dream about it. What's true about mastery of anything is you really have to have a passion for it.

The other thing I just want to say about this is – I've been emphasizing just being open to it. The complementary piece is you need to be respectful in how you're using this and to make sure that you're using it in appropriate ways.

One of the terrible things about the history of hypnosis – and its one reason why in a lot of ways I don't even use the term hypnosis anymore– I use the term generative trance because hypnosis got to be thought of as this process of controlling or tricking other people, of doing things with people that they wouldn't ordinary do. That's a very dumb idea that has very little value unless you're tremendously insecure.

So, what we're looking to do is have this sense that there's this creative intelligence that lives within everybody, and that trance is this opportunity to be able to activate it. To do that, of course, you have to respect that person, and you have to care for that person and you have to have some sort of agreement with that person that they want to dance, if you will.

Then secondly, depending on the type of work, you want to do work where you can remain comfortable and that you can stay present with whatever is happening. So if somebody's got, for example, trauma or something, you don't want to just wade into that. You use trance for many different purposes.

What I'm saying is part of it is you can use it as a sense of play in the world and as a sense of opening possibility, but that doesn't mean that you use it in the same way to do therapeutic work, which you should only do if you're properly trained.

Igor: For sure. I think something else that came out there is the idea that you only work within the realms that you are comfortable and capable of working. Like you said someone who's a novice therapist probably won't be starting to deal with big traumas, like child abuse or something like that because they're just not ready for it.

You may as well start with getting the induction first, some pleasant experiences, mapping out some fun things, maybe some motivation stuff, test anxiety and stuff like that. Then those experiences give you confidence, even as a novice therapist, to go down these other more intense routes.

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Another thing that you said – and again just to point this out – and it's something I think is very important that I like to emphasize with my students also, is the idea of the social context. The context within which hypnosis occurs is something that you generate by your interaction. So it's by genuinely caring, showing non-verbally, if you like, that these people are safe and they'll be respecting.

You know, again, it's the classic chicken joke. It's not so much the idea that people are clucking like chickens. That's what people have a problem with. It's the implied disrespect or the embarrassment. So if you take that away from the whole equation and actually empower people, rather than empowering yourself as a hypnotist, it becomes much easier to create a cooperative element. Of course, part of that is, is coming across as a reliable person.

This is something I think that some of the, shall we say, NLP community gets a little bit wrong with their crazy language patterns. If you come across as a weirdo who says, when hasn't now been the time you were before in the future past now relaxing deeply and people look at you like okay, what drugs are you on right now? It doesn't create that area of safety where people can release and relax into the experience you're trying to create for them.

I think that's a very important feature and I think you just put your fingers right on the nub of that.

Stephen: I would say that the quality of the unconscious mind is a function of the integrity of the social context. That's what really separates a positive trance from a negative trance.

So we have this crucial distinction that I was alluding to earlier between trance and hypnosis. Trance is in the basic nature of your consciousness. That it happens whether or not there's a hypnotist around. It happens whenever you go outside the box of normal identity, whether that happens intentionally or not, whether it's positive or negative.

Whenever you go outside the box of ordinary identity, you go into a trance, but trance is not complete. It needs a human presence that needs a psychological context for it to be able to have meaning and for it to be able to have shape and so forth.

Generally, that's what the conscious mind is for. That's also what the social community is for. That's what hypnosis is for, so hypnosis is not trance. Hypnosis is the social psychological context that's the sort of the context in which trance is dropped into. If that social context doesn't have integrity, if

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it's there to disrespect people, if it's not open, then the trance will turn out to be negative.

That's the basic idea, a core idea in Erickson's utilization principle, which is really the key to all of his work. It's what allowed him to accept and make room for even the craziest parts of people's experience. There was this philosophical route that if you were to hold this unconscious process in a different way, that it would have a different value.

That was the whole movement of Ericksonian hypnotherapy is how to be able to accept a symptom and to be able to hold it in a different way so that the unconscious process could be able to transform itself by virtue of that different contextual holding. Hypnosis is the context, in which you're holding the unconscious.

Igor: This reminds me of an interesting story, which goes down the same route. People think of hypnosis as just being pure experience and it isn't. It's experience given a context to relate the experience back to, to make sense of it. I believe it was Jung was a great example of this. When he had his psychotic break, and he spent, I don't know, four or five years in the back of his garden talking to hallucinated figures from hell.

As opposed to most people who would be frightened about losing their mind, which is a pretty intense experience, what he ended doing is having these fascinating dialogs with these creates and journaling them, writing them down in his diaries as intense fodder for research as a psychologist, which, of course, that was his training at the time.

Because of this something very interesting happened. At the end of this five-year cycle the hallucinations went away and he came out not just more knowledgeable about unconscious processes, not just saying that because he managed to survive a pretty frightening experience for most people, but somehow magically he actually transformed from this stiff, rigid and slightly cold intellectual to this very warm avuncular figure.

Stephen: He was Swiss.

Igor: Yes exactly. That's the kind of process you're describing here, isn't it?

Stephen: Yeah, that's it.

Igor: The idea that you take an experience that might be called negative, but given the right context and right way of supporting it, actually becomes the very vehicle that will release you from the nightmare, the terror and actually give you a massive gift to boot if you're willing to go through that phase that journey so to speak.

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Stephen: That's the heart of the work, Igor. That's the heart of the work. So the question is, how do you create that human space that can, without fear, with an intelligence and a kindness, be able to absorb and receive whatever these intense unconscious experiences are and relate to them in a positive way so that they begin to assume human value.

That's the utilization approach in a nutshell. So, hypnotic trance is a formal way for exploring precisely how to do that. What we're looking at when we're using hypnotic work typically is at situations where, in a person's normal state, they can't successfully deal with some particular challenge.

We say okay, that is a reflection of the state that they're in when they engage with the challenge. It's just common. We all come up against it. There are certain challenges that each of us face, that from our ordinary state of consciousness we can't successfully deal with. That's when you would use trance.

Why do you use trance at that point? Because you're saying, let's develop a different state of consciousness. Let's shift to a higher state of consciousness. I'm sure we'll be talking more about what that means somatically, what that means in terms of cognitive patterning, what it means to, what I call a field consciousness.

So now, when you take the same core experience, you are holding it in a higher state of consciousness, and the meaning that you have, the perception you have, the way that you connect with it and the way that it subsequently unfolds are fundamentally different because you're in a different state.

To me, that's how I understand hypnosis. It's how to explore the attunement to a higher state of consciousness so that things that are ordinarily overwhelming you or that you're not able to do, you can do by virtue of being in this higher state.

Igor: Right. So this would explain also, I guess, why it is that some hypnotists would fail because they somehow violate this process that gets people to this – it's not just the state that they're creating, it's the interaction with the state that somehow they're losing at. So, they could actually be very close to success when they think they're failing, but somehow they're losing it because of lack of trust. Maybe they're pushing too quickly for something. Maybe their timing is out of sync or something like that.

- ◆ **What would you say are the most common features in your experience, both as a therapist and as a trainer of other therapists that people make, especially in the early stages that would be considered “failure”? But really, if looked at it in a**

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slightly different way would actually be the stepping stones for their greatest success once they learn to recognize experience in a slightly different light?

Stephen: That's a big question. I think there are two things that I would emphasize.

1. The first is what we were just talking about, which is that when you are coming up against what you would call failure, the first place to look is your own state.

It's not so much what's happening in the client it's what's happening in you that isn't allowing success. There's something in you that you have not accepted that's active, there's something in you that is not open and so you are not providing the proper context for the experience to be able to transform. That comes back to creating the state within yourself and then setting an intention where you have agreement with your partner.

2. So, a second major reason for failure is that you don't share the same intention. You don't have a shared agreement.

Erickson used to say, hypnosis is all about motivation. You need to find out what your client wants and make sure that you have a way of agreeing with that so that you're sharing that intention together.

3. Then thirdly, one of the hallmarks of trance, one of the things that distinguishes the unconscious is it creates experiences that are unexpected and don't quite make sense to your conscious mind.

So, if you're going to work with the unconscious, you're basically, inviting that person's unconscious to bring forth whatever it thinks is meaningful to the change process.

You need to appreciate that a lot of times it will be different from what you expect. One of the things that happens is things come up. The hypnotist is unwilling or unable to accept it as a meaningful contribution, and that creates an impasse. There's a sort of a mantra, if you will, once you get settled, once you get centered, once you open your awareness beyond any problem, beyond any focus to be in what I would call a create trance.

Then once you have an intention, you hold this mantra. Whatever happens makes sense. Whatever comes up in the trance makes sense. I'm sure it makes sense. Don't ask my conscious mind how it makes sense. I'm the last to find out. Again, one of the hearts of the utilization principle says, '*your capacity to be able to accept something is what allows the work to succeed.*'

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Now what it means to accept something is one of those 10,000-hour questions also.

Igor: Of course.

Stephen: It doesn't mean just passively submitting. It means to accept something with this great curiosity and this open-mindedness of being curious about how it can teach you its value, how it can teach you how it can contribute to the solution.

Igor: I think one way that you've actually described it in the past, which was very helpful to myself, was to say that one of the primary roles of a hypnotist is to find that aspect of a person that they hate about themselves, that they want to reject or cut out and destroy. In other words, they're resisting some part of themselves.

The job of the hypnotist is, basically, to go there and put attention to it in an accepting, valuing, curious way. In other words, finding out where is the actual value in this in a way that the person themselves cannot, until they start doing the same thing.

Much like when you look up at the sky long enough, people around you will start looking up as well. If you look at someone's problem long enough with a sense there's value here, I'm just trying to find this value, what does it mean, what is the value of this? Then as soon as they start looking at the sky or this problem in the same way, that's when the transformation can start taking place and that's when it starts turning the clock.

If hypnotists can't do that, I think that's the block you were just mentioning, if they don't accept it, they reach this impasse where something bad has happened, and by the hypnotist reacting with shock themselves, it reinforces the fact that this is bad and shouldn't be there and should be cut out even further. In other words, the problem gets worse because now we have an outside influence of authority injecting another label of how not right the situation is, whereas the reverse is a healing element.

◆ Does that kind of match the kind of experience that you're trying to evoke in people?

Stephen: Yeah, you're talking about something that I consider very crucial, which is the connection with the symptom or the negative part. I wouldn't say, however, that it's the most important.

It's really important, but I think even more importantly, the first connection is – we were mentioning it at the outset when I was talking about from the deep trance identification – the sense of this person is already in a deep

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trance, or stated in another way, I really look to sense before I trust myself to speak to a person.

Then I can feel that they're already transformed, that they're already whole, that there's this presence, if you will, that is unwounded and that is whole in the person, and that's their creative unconscious. You might say, that sounds esoteric. If you think about how you feel when you connect with somebody you really love or if you were doing something like playing music with a person or in a deep trance with somebody, you feel their wholeness. You feel their spark. That's the first base.

Then, the question is how to get to second base, which is all, their performance self, all the ways that they're being in the world aligned with that? One of the main ways that doesn't happen is that certain parts of the self have been judged negatively and dissociated.

As long as that's happening, the person cannot experience wholeness. All of the transformational qualities of the creative unconscious are properties of wholeness. They don't come out of part of the system. They come when the system is operating as a whole. So any time that you're trying to get rid of something, you're sacrificing the generative level of your consciousness.

So, for that reason, to help a person in a generative trance, we're on the lookout for anything that they're saying is bad or is not okay. Then we're looking to see how we can hold that as you're saying. First, the hypnotist holding it in a positive way and then being curious about how the client might also be able to do that with the sense that once they're able to do that, now they can experience their unity, their wholeness, and that's when all the good stuff happens.

Igor: Right. Now we're going to be exploring exactly how to do that a little bit more when we get into the more seminar-teaching portion of these Interviews very shortly. I'm very excited about that.

Before we go down that road, there is another door. I know you have this annual Trance Camp where people actually get to take this journey that we've been talking about, this idea of connecting the unconscious in a more holistic way, in a more generative way. I believe you call it the Hero's Journey. You used the metaphor of the Hero's Journey as the map for exploring these hypnotic experiences back to kind of wholeness.

- ◆ **Can you tell us a little about what you mean by the Hero's Journey and how that fits into the kind of stuff we've been talking about throughout this Interview?**

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Stephen: I don't think this year the Trance Camp is called the Hero's Journey. I have to check. You can go to the website at StephenGilligan.com, but every July we do for three weeks in the San Diego area the Trance Camp, which you have attended, of course.

Igor: Several times.

Stephen: The thinking about using generative trance or using trance in the deepest possible way in your life leads us to this beautiful myth that the mythologist, Joseph Campbell, wrote about in his book. In 1948, he published this book called, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, and he said when you look at every culture throughout time, you see that there's this monomyth, if you will, of somebody going on a journey of transformation.

He called that the hero. Somebody who leaves the village, if you will; leaves the known world and responds to some call to create something that's never existed before, to be able to recover something that has been lost to the self or to the community, to be able to generate something that will be healing or fulfilling to self and to the community.

So the person responds to this calling, and they go on this great journey of consciousness that has a lot of transformation, and use that word, of course, at multiple levels because you need to go into generative trance to fulfill this great journey.

Milton Erickson was a beautiful example of a Hero's Journey. Your listeners may or may not know all these sort of strange idiosyncrasies about Erickson, that he was colorblind. He could only see the color purple. He was tone deaf. He was dyslexic. He didn't know the dictionary was alphabetized until he was a teenager. When he was 17, just ready from a traditional viewpoint to become an adult, he was struck down with severe polio.

So he had to go through all of these things, these great challenges in his life to discover a way to heal himself, to discover a way to live at this very generative level that's the what Hero's Journey is about. After the hero engages in that amazing journey they then have this calling to come back and contribute to their community.

We can see each life in terms of a Hero's Journey, and we can see the symptoms, the inevitable challenges, the invariable setbacks that occur in people's lives in terms of these, what Campbell calls the ogres or the demons, the great challenges that mark the places where you're called to do transformative work.

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So in that regard, we see that in order to do this great transformation, to do this amazing healing, to be able to create things that you've never experienced before or that never were in the world before, you can't do it from your ordinary conscious state. It's impossible. Your conscious state is fundamentally conservative. It has a present and a past. It only knows how to recreate where it's been before.

So every time you're facing a significant challenge, you have to let go of your conscious mind and go into a different state. So what we explore in the Trance Camp is what that state would be that would allow you to be in a creative transformative healing state of consciousness so that you can do your own Hero's Journey.

Igor: It's like a methodology that's giving you a sense of experiences and a kind of a personal toolkit to either reclaim lost power or to step into a great personal power than you could otherwise have because of the limitations of consciousness.

In other words, you step outside of your normal day-to-day limitations and enter new realities where you can be a greater you and, as a result, you bring that you back and it's part of that path of how do you find that greater you.

◆ **How do you bring it back into your normal everyday world so you can start living as this greater person, that we all have the potential to be but don't necessarily always get into?**

Stephen: Absolutely. It again feeds back into this generative notion of trance that is radically different from a hypnotist programming the subject. The notion of a call, for example, which is a crucial element, means that you're listening to something deep within you.

Responding to the call is not an ego decision. It's not like, okay, I'm going to be this in the world. It's trying to sense what inside of me is calling me to what Campbell called your experience of bliss, which many people misunderstood and thought it was just California hedonism, but the place where you feel most alive. He said that tells you what you're in the world to do.

A hypnotist can't tell you that. Somebody outside of you can't tell you that. So generative hypnosis shouldn't be used with the idea that you've got to tell the person what to do, but rather they have a connection to something deep within them that they can attune to. Then, by virtue of attuning to that they can find the resources to meet whatever challenges, and they can find this calling in terms of what they're in the world really to do that will make

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them the happiest and will allow them to make the greatest contribution in the world.

That's the intersection of generative trance and the Hero's Journey.

Igor: So rather than sitting in a lecture room for up to three weeks – in Trance Camp, so people will know, you can come for one week up to I think a total of three weeks is the total length, and you get to choose how long works for you. In that time, rather than sitting there and being lectured to about philosophical concepts and maybe having an induction placed on you saying, this is how you must be to be powerful or whatever.

What you're doing instead is you are going on a journey of discovery. You're exploring your own resources, your own thinking, your own past experiences as well as creating new experiences that might fit you and that's an evolution of yourself rather than a rigid plan that has to be done only this way.

Stephen: I hear you speaking from experience.

Igor: I do indeed. You do indeed, should I say. I can only say that I had some terrific times and Trance Camp. I learned a lot of very valuable things there, and it's not so much what your intellect takes away. That's my experience. It's more the things that happen, as a result, of you not thinking after you leave over.

It goes right back to that classic quote of Erickson that you like so much, and that I love using myself, which is, I don't know, and be comfortable in the fact that you don't know and it's a good not knowing, rather than a bad not knowing.

Stephen: Yeah. If you talk to anybody who just had a great idea or came up with some creative product, and if you ask them, where did that idea come from, the most typical response is, I don't know. It's that I don't know mind that we're saying take me to your leader, that we're saying let me see if I can hook myself to this being my lead system.

Again, it's not that the conscious mind becomes irrelevant. It's that the conscious mind is able to steer, but it's not the lead system. It sets intention, but then it's asking for this deeper creative intelligence to be able to guide it. William James, who was often described as the Father of American Psychology in the turn of the last century, in the days before the Model T, used to say that the unconscious is the horse and the conscious mind is the rider, and everything depends on the relationship between the two.

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So the notion of a generative trance is about harmonizing that connection between the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. What we're saying is when you do that, it produces a third kind of mind, something that's beyond the traditional unconscious and the traditional conscious.

Trance camp is a great place. As you know, I do trainings all over the world throughout the year. Typically, it's my favorite training. Partly because we have people from so many different cultures that are there, partly because it's the summer, we have the trance pools and dancing at night. Everybody's in a really great community feeling, but also very committed to doing some very deep experiences about trying to get this great sense of how can you connect up practically to the creative unconscious.

Igor: Well, again, just to emphasize, this is a wonderful experience and I've really enjoyed it when I've been through it. Those of you who, of course, are in the Private Hypnosis Club are in for a treat.

Stephen has agreed to reveal some of these secrets starting with some of the general tools he uses for trance, actually showing us the way he approaches hypnosis and trance work and then evolving those into this idea of using those tools for this generative kind of trance, using them specifically for these kinds of purposes.

He's going to be guiding us through, if you like, a mini Trance Camp over the course of the next two sessions after that. Otherwise, if you really want to experience the live, in-the-flesh version – and I really recommend it – go to StephenGilligan.com and find out more about Trance Camp.

My name is Igor Ledochowski from StreetHypnosis.com and I've been interviewing Master Hypnotist Stephen Gilligan. Stephen, let me just say again, thank you so much for sharing this wealth of insight. I look forward to speaking to you again in the next session where you're actually going to reveal to us some of the mechanics on how to achieve these ideas and states that we've been talking about here.

Stephen: It's a pleasure, Igor. Thanks a lot.

Igor: Thank you.

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Seminar 1 – Part 1

Igor: Welcome to StreetHypnosis.com. My name is Igor Ledochowski, and I'm here with Master Hypnotist Stephen Gilligan from StephenGilligan.com, for our Interview with a Hypnosis Master Series.

First, Stephen, welcome on board and thanks for being back here with us.

Stephen: My pleasure, Igor.

Igor: Now, in the first Interview session, you gave us a good introduction into how you think as a hypnotist, you had experiences that fed into it, of course, but more importantly, your philosophy and your framework, which I think is a very interesting and unique framework for doing hypnotic work or trance work.

One of the things we want to do in this session – and thank you again for offering to do this – is to actually explore your approach and start building some tools that allow people to get experience with this. This leads us to the question that we touched on in several different ways in the previous session, and I think it's something we're looking at in more detail here.

- ◆ **As far as you're concerned, what is trance and in particular, what do you consider the distinction between trance and hypnosis to be, because that's going to be a fundamental step in using your method or your system effectively?**

Stephen: Right. Well, I think the simplest description of trance is it's a sustained absorption in primitive consciousness. By primitive consciousness, I mean that we sort of start with this experiential consciousness that is non-linear. It's not based on verbal language. It's not based upon verbal rules, but its part of this large unified field of deep consciousness that's connected to the planet, that's connected to the history of consciousness, that's connected to pretty much everything.

That's the base of our consciousness. It's where all the energy comes from. It's where all of the resources are. It's a place within which, because it's not linearly structured, you can get anywhere from anywhere. It's not complete, however. One of the great things about human consciousness is that we have evolved this second level, if you will, which in hypnosis is called the conscious mind. You'd call it the cognitive level.

That cognitive level is the map maker. It builds models. It builds descriptions. It's based primarily on verbal language. It's based on verbal rules. It's able to work in sequences and all this great stuff.

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Unfortunately, sometimes what happens is that people can get much too caught up in that secondary conscious mind consciousness. When a person does that, they're not able to create anything new. Things operate in a very, very predictable way.

When that creates a problem, that is to say that a person's stuck in a particular experience or a certain way of thinking, that's where we would want to use hypnosis in order to shift a person's attention back into what you might call the great ocean of consciousness, the primitive mind.

Anytime that your first attention becomes absorbed in that primitive consciousness, I would say that's a trance. Now some people would say that that's too general of a definition, but I think if you're going to be working in any sort of creative generative way, you need a general definition because it allows you to begin then to see how this trance can play out in many, many, many different ways.

One of the key parts of the utilization approach that Erickson developed is a symptom, a problem, as a sort of a negative trance state. So what we're interested in doing is seeing how we can develop a positive trance state.

Igor: If I can kind of sum up some of the ideas that you're presenting then, that's actually a very interesting way of picking a synopsis of a very broad field.

First, it seems that you want to do something with attention, to move some of the attention in a particular way, in a useful way to lead it to a certain place, and that certain place is a more, as you would call it, primitive way of functioning or thinking in terms of the mind.

As you move the attention to this more primitive way, a doorway opens up...

Stephen: A sustained absorption in the primitive.

Igor: Sustained absorption, so they kind of get involved in this other place of the mind where other things are possible. It's almost like the walls of normal everyday thinking are broken down, and everything becomes possible – good and bad.

Stephen: That's right.

Igor: Then this skill comes into steering that infinite possibility one way or the other to choose the right kind of trance, given the nature of the problem or the nature of the situation the person finds themselves in.

Stephen: Yes or I would say more precisely, the best relationship to the trance so that it gets shaped and unfolds along particular desirable paths.

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Igor:

- ◆ Which goes back to the idea of letting the trance or an experience evolve rather than trying to force a particular experience through micro-managing suggestions, if you like?

Stephen: Yes. You just have the sense that the trance is already there at some level, and what we're interested in doing is drawing it out and deepening the person's connection and attention to it, and then seeing how it can align with whatever the intention is in the relationship.

Igor: Let's take that idea then, and see how we can start expounding on it and using it as hypnotists now. I know you have a four-step model that gives some structure around these ideas, some purposeful goals or objectives people can meet in an almost linear sort of fashion to make that a useful experience.

- ◆ Can you talk to us a little bit about that four-step model that you have, and then we can start seeing if we can put this into action in terms of actual hypnotic techniques?

Stephen: Sure. The four-step model is actually the same sort of model that's used in any ritual process.

1. The four steps are the preparation in consciousness to a different state to a trance state.
2. Using that new state for transformational purposes.
3. Then very importantly, making sure that whatever was created inside of the trance makes its way back into the person's ordinary world.
4. The fourth step would be described as the return to ordinary consciousness.

Igor: So we have the idea of—

- a) You prepare the scene, so to speak. The context.
- b) You create the shift from normal functioning to external normal functioning.

Stephen: Which in hypnosis that's called induction

Igor: Which would be the induction in hypnosis? So, in classical hypnosis, the preparation would be something like the pre-talk and the shifting bit would be the induction.

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- c) Then the transformational bit would be, in classical terms, the suggestions being given.
- d) Finally, the re-orientation would be like the re-integration and emergence, bringing people out of trance phase so that they have what happened on the inside on the outside.

◆ Is that correct?

Stephen: As well as things like posthypnotic suggestion.

Igor: Of course, which is very important to create that link between the world on the inside and on the outside, correct?

Stephen: That's right. Therefore, in terms of doing any sort of meaningful work in trance, that four-step model I think, becomes very important because you can see that a lot of the problems you can run into doing trance work whether, it's problems where you're not able to generate a sufficient level of trance, things don't happen well or might turn negative. This can seem to be an expression of trying to do the hypnotic changes before the context has been properly developed.

Milton Erickson used to have a saying, one of his many little saying was, I always like to finish the job before I begin. We would dutifully write down, he likes to finish before he begins. I think he was referring to this one thing.

So that preparation has three parts to it. One is without doing any formal trance, having people just begin to what I call, do some centering or do some settling in and settling down. These little mini seeds, if you will that open up the experiential components of trance before the word trance is ever mentioned.

Then secondly, after centering is a sense of setting an intention. Everything that happens in hypnosis is going to reflect what the intention is, whether there's an agreement, whether there's a clear intention and whether there's resonance with the intention. So if you don't have a clear sense of intention, a lot of times your hypnotic work is not going to develop very well. So there's the setting of intention.

Then third is what I would call inviting resources. Again, this is almost a mini trance before formal trance is introduced. I could demonstrate that right now with you.

Igor: Shall we do that? So we've got the three phases of the preparation phase. We're not even going to look at the induction stuff yet, but just so we get a feel for it. We're looking out for:

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1. A sense of getting settled in and centered.
2. Creating an intention or a purpose for the trance, something we're trying to achieve.
3. Find some resources and start stimulating that to help us get to that intention.

Is that correct?

Stephen: That's right.

Igor:

- ◆ **If I came to you as a client and you're going to hypnotize me, how might we begin?**

Stephen: If you're talking with me right now and are interested in going into a trance, if that is the case, it's nice to know, isn't it? If that is the case now, isn't it Igor?

Before you go all of the way into a deep trance, I really don't want you to go all the way quite yet. I'd just like to ask you to take a few moments to just go a little bit. That's good. That's nice that your breathing is changing. We couldn't have consciously planned that. So many things are beginning to happen from within that you can't consciously plan, but really before you go all the way into a nice deep trance, I'm just going to ask you to settle in a little bit more.

Settle down just a little bit not too much, just enough so that as you settle down, it's like you've the sense that inside of you there's a nice comfortable place. Why not let it be very comfortable? So comfortable that you can enjoy sensing what is it that you really would most like to experience in a nice deep trance today?

I don't really want you to think about that too much consciously, but you can be aware that as you breathe, it's nice to breathe. As you breathe, that's good. You're going to let a simple word or a phrase, maybe it will be an image, maybe it will be a feeling, just a simple sense that begins to represent now from your inner self. What is it that you most want to experience here today in trance?

Then, when you become aware of something, you can just go ahead and verbally share that with me.

Igor: So what came up was the idea of – the words were mental clarity, but it's more than that. It's I have a lot of things at work, different directions I could go in, some of them I think are fascinating, but there are pieces missing that I'm trying to fit in, and the difficulty is the very large pieces that I want to make easy for people to grasp.

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Some clarity in terms of direction, in terms of taking people there and I guess, in going there myself first because I've got all these different experiences that I'm not quite sure how they fit together yet. And, some of them have blockages that I have to try to break down for others to be able to get through as well, mostly clarity.

Stephen: You can hear, of course, the way that you're answering that question is the typical conscious mind way, which is a lot of different words that sort of go this way and then go that way and so forth.

To set an intention for a productive trance, usually I like to suggest we observe the five words or less, rule. That really is going to help your unconscious quite a bit. So if you could fill in the simple statement, what I most want to experience in trance is [what?].

Igor: What I most want to experience in trance is a purposeful mental clarity.

Stephen: That's good. That's very good. So that intention should satisfy three criteria.

1. It should be five words or less.
2. It should be a positive change as something that would be happening in the world.
3. It should have resonance, which is to say that as you say it, I can sense that it's meaningful for you, and that for me as the hypnotist, it touches me. I can feel that it's really important for Igor.

That requirement is there to make sure that both your unconscious and my unconscious get activated because until I can feel that suggestion that your unconscious is giving – mental clarity – my unconscious will not be able to become active. So when you say that, it touches me, and I can see that it looks like it touches you too. Is that right?

Igor: For sure. I can sense a whole bunch of things opening up and it's very exciting.

Stephen: So before you go into a deep trance, I'm going to ask you to close your eyes again. That's good. Just take a few nice deep breaths as you feel that simple suggestion that your unconscious is beginning to give to both you and me for today's work so that all the different creative activity from you and from me is working together to really enjoy discovering how it is that you can achieve that beautiful mental clarity. Just allow yourself to breathe it in.

Don't go too deeply into trance yet. You really want to hold out a little bit longer. Then come on back out and tell me what happened?

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Igor: It's almost like my thinking stopped. I just had this calm space opening up.

Stephen: So this little opening, you can begin to see a couple things about how it might be very, very helpful to work in small chunks. This begins to allow the subject to dip into trance and then come out, give some feedback and then dip back in. Notice I keep telling you don't go into deep trance quite yet. That, of course, is what we call a presupposition that the trance will happen in just a little bit.

Igor: It also seems to build up a little frustration. I'm going, come on. I'm waiting at the gate. Just let me go.

Stephen: That's right, and if we did it the other way, then you would be more likely to resist. So, if I'm asking you to resist trance, then you naturally want to go into trance. Isn't that nice that I could hold all the resistance for you?

Igor: It's very pleasant.

Stephen: And that makes trance irresistible for you. Isn't it happening a little bit more, not all the way? By the way, there's one more thing before we formally address trance.

When you're ready, I'd like you to close your eyes again and as you close your eyes, I just want your inner intelligence. I'd like to welcome your creative unconscious and really ask your creative unconscious to continue to guide you and me in this amazing experience today.

For now I'm going to just ask you to let yourself access any resources, the people in your life, experiences, any beings – they could be historical beings that you know really support you and your process of achieving greater mental clarity. You're going to be able to realize that the trance you're beginning to develop is both inside of you and all around you.

Sometimes it's interesting to be curious. Is it more all around you or is it more inside of you? At some places you really begin to wonder is what's inside of you all around you? Or, is what's all around you also inside of you?

Time and space begin to shift fluidly, in the beautiful way that your unconscious mind can weave and experience that will allow you mental clarity in the days to come. For now you can just notice how much support that you really have for this journey, and how deeply you can relax and trust knowing that you have so much support.

Then, when you're ready, you'll find yourself taking another breath that will allow you to open your eyes and come on back out here.

Hypnosis Master – Stephen Gilligan

Igor: Back again.

Stephen: Hello.

Igor: Hello.

Stephen: Tell me what you experienced then.

Igor: I had a bunch of things. I had a couple of different figures that feed in. I'm thinking particularly about an advanced self-hypnosis program I'm working on. I had at one point sort of the Buddha, this idea of mental clarity and the sheer intensity of focus. Milton Erickson came back to me as well for the same reason because he has this intense focus, and that's part of where his insights came from.

I had someone else, but it just seems to have faded. Oh yes, the other side was a German doctor called Dr. Schultz from, of course, autogenic training, who was kind of the opposite. He made things very simple and easy, very step-wise and very easy for you to get a hold of.

Then I had a flash of an image, which I can't quite make sense of. It's kind of like different colored lights all connected. I began to feel a buzzing in my chest.

Stephen: Different colored lights you said?

Igor: Yeah, it's got different colored lights and a little pattern. It felt like some kind of energy thing going through them, and just after that I felt a kind of gentle buzzing in my chest, like an emotional buzzing. The ideas that came out of that was like partly an emotional awakening, partly that all these things just can't be in the mind. They have to be in the body.

You're using one to effect the other and vice versa, but it's all very gentle. It wasn't in any way overwhelming. It's a step-by-step, gentle almost guided by the hand type thing. It felt like a very pleasant experience, a very pleasant way to take this path.

Stephen: Yes.

This is an example of the first step of those first three steps of centering, intention and resources. You can notice a couple of things. One is the trance is unfolding from within you.

Secondly, we're working in these small chunks, so we're really sort of careful in a sense and it allows me to get a lot of feedback.

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Thirdly, you may notice that the “hypnotic techniques” are really beginning to come more from you than from me.

Igor: Right, because I’m giving you my symbolism and the directions to go and so on. It feels from this side, just so people understand what it feels like, I’m sure if you followed along you had something similar. It just feels very gentle in the sense that I actually wasn’t even thinking about anything, really in a kind of blank mind. I wasn’t even trying to do anything, just random musings popped into my mind but they’re very clearly defined. It was very simple to do.

Stephen: That’s right. Now, one thing that I think was straightforward for you, it’s not uncommon that some people will have different blocks, if you will or different conscious processes that are hard for them to let go of. It’s great to find out those right away.

Igor: Right, because those are the things that might interfere with the trance process otherwise.

Stephen: Right and you want to welcome them, and you get this opportunity to clearly observe them as the hypnotist, and you open this curiosity, oh that’s interesting. How can we work with that?

Igor: Let me just try an example on you. What if during this preparation phase, I’d said to you something like, well, I’m feeling kind of a little anxious because I feel like I should be doing something, but I don’t know what to do and I don’t think I’m doing it right. I keep trying to do it right, but nothing’s really coming and so on? So there’s a particular theme like that emerging.

◆ **How might you deal with that as an example of these meditations you’re talking about that might interfere with this process of preparation?**

Stephen: First, I would just make sure to breathe it into me, because I’m on the lookout for this sort of thing, I’m on the lookout for those images like Buddha and Erickson. I’m equally on the lookout for, oh, there’s this presence of anxiety that has this internal dialogue I’m not doing it right. So, if you tell me that then I would say oh, that’s very interesting. As you begin to tune to this intention there’s some presence inside of you that begins to wonder if he’s doing it right.

I just like to say to that presence inside of you, welcome. I’m sure that, that makes sense, and I’m sure that you have a very, very important contribution to make not only in the trance, but in the process of being able to help Igor achieve that mental clarity. I really want to welcome you. What happens when I say that?

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Igor: Well, it's interesting just thinking about it and putting myself in those shoes almost. A couple of things come to my mind. One is its being very gentle, rather than – the place I'd put myself to think of the problem was to resist and fight and doubt, whereas now it's almost like, oh, I was doing it right. So wondering about whether I'm doing it right was actually the right thing. The energy just starts being directed to somewhere else.

Number two, believe it or not, even though I didn't actually have the experience just by thinking about it, by you're talking to me in these ways, I started spacing out again. I could feel that gentle trance trying to evolve within me again, and that was very pleasant. I was kind of hoping you wouldn't stop talking because it did feel good.

Stephen: Yeah, so this notion of resistance we want to emphasize it entirely as a hypnotist phenomenon. That is, the subject's experience is just unfolding as it's unfolding and that's the way it is it's the task of the hypnotist to be able to create a place where you're not resisting any of it. You're not getting overwhelmed or you're not getting dominated by any of it either.

Igor: It puts me in mind of one of the exercises that you like to do. I got this from you in Trance Camp, which I think is very valuable; it's the idea of both and thinking that the unconscious mind doesn't have to resolve paradoxes. You can both go into a comfortable trance and doubt that it's happening. You can both have all these Buddha and energy images, and wonder if you're doing it right.

So, there's this sense of being inclusive thinking rather than being exclusive, which I found very a insightful and powerful path to overcoming this idea of resistance because then it's just a question of having resistance and doing the trance work anyway.

Stephen: Well, I think it's one of the crucial differences between the "conscious" mind and the "unconscious" mind. The conscious mind, the ego intellect is restricted to one truth per customer, please. So you can only have one state. The important thing to note about that is to do anything creative usually means that you have to integrate or work with multiple contradictory states simultaneously. That's part of the creative process.

One example, what you were just saying is say the person has this internal dialogue. You want to make room for it but not be restricted by it. So if you say, there's a presence in me that is worried I can't go into trance, I want to invite that part of you in, but then I also want to say, and I guess there's a presence in you that is also really interested and curious about how you can go into trance.

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That's the opposite side and then I'd be suggesting that we can really be able to attune to both sides simultaneously, and that becomes a sort of an interesting hypnotic technique.

Igor: Right. In itself it almost presupposes trance to be able to hold those two ideas, which seem conflicting at the same time without even trying to resolve a conflict, somehow something greater than the two parts starts to emerge, as a result, of it.

Stephen: And that's what we call the creative unconscious.

Igor: And that's kind of where we're heading with this idea of a greater trance, the idea of the generative trances. If I understand you correctly, it's more in that direction. So rather than having an exclusive trance, it becomes a more inclusive and, hence, generative trance, that takes you in many different creative directions.

Stephen: Well, one of the important distinctions of generative consciousness, including generative trance, is that you have these two simultaneous levels of consciousness that are active. One is the content – the different parts of the experience – and the other is the context – or the field that is holding them. In a generative trance, you're both the space that's holding it all and, unfortunately, language gets terribly awkward and unsatisfactory at that level.

So excuse my California terms, but the space that holds it and you're also at the level of – well, I experienced this, I experienced fear, I experienced deep trance, I experienced wanting that, etc. So you're able to guide it even as you deeply experience it. You can be simultaneously an observer and a participant. That, I think, is one of the key distinctions of a generative trance.

Igor: Right. So we've just done the first stage of entering this generative trance, as you call it. The idea of preparation in itself is actually quite a hypnotic thing already.

Stephen: It is.

Igor: It's very useful, particularly because it goes into this idea of more conversational style hypnosis because whilst people think they're preparing for it, they're actually having mini trance experiences to fractionate hypnosis anyway, but at the time same they're preparing for the trance. You as a hypnotist are creating the tools or resources you'll need, the building blocks, to build that specific trance up with so everyone's enriched.

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I, as a subject, get the peace of mind of actually having a couple of small dips of the toe into the water, plus to get a sense of I'm achieving something. You, as the hypnotist, are getting a sense of how to work with me and some building blocks to throw in there once we get into the bigger work as well.

That is part of the magic of just the first phase, the preparation phase and I can see the difference between that and thinking back to my own early days in hypnotherapy practice where I just wanted to launch into the hypnosis and end up having to spend the first half hour undoing my, shall we say, pre-emptive strike.

Stephen: That's right. That's another way of saying that you just don't have close enough feedback, that your chunks are too big. That you're just sort of throwing out all this stuff and hoping something sticks, rather than saying, I'm going to just really connect with all of the details of your unconscious mind, and I'm going to invite that to be able to guide the both of us into the trance work. It makes it very interesting for everybody.

Igor: For sure and it makes for a fresh trance. You don't get bored as hypnotists as well this way.

Stephen: That's right.

Igor: Your own soul stays alive.

Stephen: It makes it very interesting. You really don't know. I really don't know how you're going to go into trance even more during the next step. I really don't know.

Igor: I'm looking forward to it.

Stephen: Me too.

Igor: Just before we get there, just one idea that came to me, which I'd like to air with you, which is part of the, what I would call the process to mastery. Tell me if this is an experience you've had also. It's certainly something that I've had. As you take this dynamic approach to trance, a little bit in, a little bit out; a question here a question there, getting some feedback, finding the right building blocks and right chunk sizes to lead that specific individual through the process.

Do you find that after a time, like several years of doing this with many individuals, that you create almost like an instinct and you know how to guide maybe a group of people, or a new individual comes in, your instincts kind of kick in and go oh, I know how to pace it with this person. I know what

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kind of things to say with this person, just because some of the telltale signs you saw at the beginning triggers all these other memories of having taken little picturesque adventures inside people's minds. So you're much more familiar with the territory.

Stephen: Of course. I mean I would just assume that that's part of learning in any domain is that you have a feel for what's likely to happen, but at the same time this willingness to always be surprised.

Igor: Let's take this idea then. We've done the preparation phase and have some interesting resources things, that ironically, are not what we'd call classic resources, especially those who are trained in NLP; they'll look for a happy memory or a happy place.

These are more archetypal resources, you know, the image of the Buddha, of Erickson, some patterned lights that I still don't know what they might mean and a feeling in my chest, kind of a buzzing, tingling energy sensation. These are all symbols that I have only small inklings of where they might lead as a subject.

◆ **How would now start collecting them in and using it to shift me into the actual trance process itself?**

Stephen: I wouldn't think of them as collecting them in quite yet. I think of them as putting them on a little shelf surrounding me and the client. They're in this space that we're sharing. Also, there is now Milton Erickson and the Buddha and a tingling sensation and in the middle of this space, which I can feel vibrating is this core intention of I really want to experience deeper mental clarity. I'm sensing that in terms of something from deep within Igor is trying to wake up and this is a beautiful way of describing it.

I'm thinking of the trance as a sort of a soup, if you will. It's this unified field that's very fluid and those different symbols that we have so far developed are some of the ingredients of the soup. I'm looking to create a high quality soup. In some ways it's like cooking or doing music, because there's an aesthetic quality that you're looking to begin to develop.

So technically, the next step would be about introducing this idea of shifting the state, shifting your state to get to a place where this intention can be most fully realized. So that, to me, is the way that you can best introduce why you'd want to do a trance induction.

Igor: Right. If I understand you correctly this is the bit we talked about at the beginning, where you want to loosen the regular connection to the egoic intellect. The analytical mind and deepen the absorption more towards that more primitive set of processes, where all these things are possible. That

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fundamental shift allows you later on, to use these symbols in a purposeful, meaningful way.

Stephen: That's right. So here in the induction, I would think of three classes of techniques, if you will. One is changing the somatic state. The second is changing the cognitive relationship patterning to the goal and everything related to the goal. The third is changing the, what I call the field, which is all of the stuff in the surrounding space. So to me, that's the focus of what we'd be doing in the hypnotic induction is making shifts in those three domains.

Igor: So to maybe simplify those ideas for everyone, one might make an analogy that it's kind of like a body, mind and spirit induction. The body being the somatic sensations, the mind being the intellect or cognitive functions, and the spirit being kind of like the atmosphere, the spirit of everything, the context that surrounds it, the spirit of the law versus the letter of law, the sense of the purpose behind the rule so to speak.

Stephen: Yeah, the spirit, I don't know if I'd quite use that, but just all the fields. So it could be the memories associated to it, places and the meanings around it and so forth and so on.

Igor: That's what you would use for the actual shifting, the induction phase, before we get into the transformational element.

Stephen: Yes. So the basic idea is in the state that the person is in, this goal that they have – in this case, we're working to improve mental clarity. That, that goal is not being realized under a person's ordinary state. So what I would say is something like Igor, so you've begun to tap into a few experiences inside, and I want to thank you for sharing those with me.

I especially want to thank your creative unconscious for beginning to come forward and guide us in terms of how to develop a deep trance that will have amazing positive transformational effects.

Now, in order to develop that deep trance, one of the best ways to think about it is all of the different ways that you can shift your experience in your body so that your creative unconscious can begin to bring new patterns of experiential learning. So I'm going to ask you, for example, on a scale of 1-10, how much relaxation do you feel right now? You can just let a number pop into your mind.

Igor: Seven.

Stephen: Seven. That's good. Do you think it would be interesting to notice that as you take that nice deep breath what number your relaxation is at now?

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Igor: Eight.

Stephen: Isn't that interesting? Just by letting your breathing begin to shift, you're beginning not only to relax a little bit deeper, but you're also as you relax going into just the right level of trance that will allow your experience of mental clarity to begin to develop here, in your dreams tonight, in your experiences tomorrow. So I'm going to just ask you to notice, would it be interesting to let your relaxation develop a little bit more now?

That's good. When you're ready and as you breathe in, you could notice all the different ways that your unconscious mind begins to help you to relax, different memories, different images, a shift in breathing. Your unconscious can begin to send to you and to share in our connection all of the different ways that allow you to relax now just enough deeper now so that you can experience that level of trance. That's good. That's very good.

You don't want to go all the way because you've got to listen at another level with mental clarity about your role all the way back in the room in terms of conducting the interview, but another part of you can begin to go on a journey. That's good. I see you. We'll take a little break there, and you can tell me what are you aware of now?

Igor: That was great. It's very, very comfortable. It's starting to get very quiet inside in contrast to initially when I had these million and one pieces that I'm trying to fit together in a puzzle that I don't actually know what the picture would be like really. The opposite is happening now where I'm very clear. It's expansive. It's a sense that almost anything's possible, and I don't know what it is yet, and I don't know how I'm going to get there yet, but...

Stephen: You really don't know yet, do you?

Igor: No.

Stephen: I don't think you'll know for at least five more minutes. Do you think you can wait that long?

Igor: I'll try hard.

Stephen: Okay, you promised.

Igor: I will.

Seminar 1 – Part 2

Stephen: That's a little element. I sometimes identify these in terms of the somatic state as the five elements of a generative trance, five somatic elements. Relaxation is the dimension we were just exploring, but a good trance involves more than relaxation. It also involves good concentration. It also involves a sense of openness. It also involves a sense of fluidity, or what I sometimes call playfulness. It also involves what you might call felt sense, or aesthetic sensing.

What you were just sharing is one of the crucial reasons we use trance. You said as I begin to relax, and the way you were thinking about this challenge began to shift. That's why we're doing the trance induction because you've got your conscious mind ways of approaching the goal. They're not working, so your Plan B is let's go into trance and get a new way of being with this challenge.

So one level of the induction is somatic, which is deepen the level of relaxation, get better concentration, more playfulness, a more peripheral openness and a good felt sense.

Igor: Let's pause for just a moment. Something that I think is very important that you said there. A realization has just triggered with me there. The relaxation, of course, you achieve very easily in terms of you capture the moment, you focus my attention back to my body and something emerged. In this case, my breathing there I did that and that was very useful.

In terms of the playfulness, I think what's very important that you do, particularly for those who are more, shall we say, clinically trained to misunderstand, is you bring a lot of that playful in terms of how you're dealing with it. You're playing with me with the language in a friendly way, and that gives me a sense of oh, that's the place that we're doing now, that's kind of where we're going with it.

I'm kind of following suit, so rather than saying be more playful, you're actually being more playful, and that makes me want to be more playful with it at the same time. Be less serious about am I doing it right or wrong and so on.

Stephen: That's right. Well, I always just say that one of the great things about Milton Erickson was he carried these three what I call archetypal energies equally. One was tenderness. He was able to be sweet and accepting and kind, soothing, but also fierce as could be. He could cut through the bullshit. He

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had incredible concentration. He could be very, very serious about things, and last but not least, there was this incredible playfulness.

Again, the idea is that to do anything generative – and by the way, I think we briefly touched on it in the first interview, one of the key definitions of generative means to create something that has never existed before to go beyond where you've been, so far on your path that you need to have a sense of playfulness. You need a sense of fluidity. Being overly serious is the kiss of death when it comes to creativity. It's a vital part in your hypnotic technique.

Igor: Right and this something which again, you explore a lot in your Trance Camp, which I think is a very useful thing to do because it's one of those unwritten laws, I guess, of hypnosis. It's something that you need to develop. It's not good enough telling you to develop it. You need some experiences that help shape you to do that.

Stephen: Right. Yeah, it is a big emphasis on that. Trance camp is making sure that everybody there develops their capacity to be in generative consciousness.

Igor: Now another thing that you did there, just to pull out some of second maneuver you had there, which was very interesting, was we began by focusing on the body and the relaxation and those other doors opened up. As things starting flowing more smoothly in that dimension, you shifted and it surprised me actually initially and it was actually very pleasant.

You shifted from just purely experiential sensation awareness, like breathing and so on, to a more cognitive awareness. The idea of memories, experiences from the past. All kinds of interesting things started coming back at that point. So you're including my intellect, but in a different way again.

So you start with the body, which is less intellectually involved, but you're still having the intellect being involved in the trance process, rather than just sending it away and not being part of the party.

Stephen: Absolutely. There are a couple points about that. One is one of the ways to be able to access creative unconscious is to make sure that you have at least three or four different channels that are open simultaneously. To me, good hypnotic technique is to be able to flow between different content areas.

There is no, single content area that will get you all the way to the finish line. So, if you start with body sensations, you go down to that for a while, and then you want to open up something else.

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Partly this is to make sure that the conscious mind doesn't begin to dominate because, again, the conscious mind likes linearity and one topic and a time, but if you can be able to shift fluidly and have the conversation moving nonlinearly between multiple contents, it really is a nice hypnotic technique, if you would call it that.

Igor: Right. Let's pause here for a moment, so I can do a little recap of what we've done so far, just so people don't get lost in the amorphis-ness. I know your work is characterized by this spontaneous creation as you go through, which is very powerful, but just to create a little bit of structure so people will have something to hold onto. We've got the core four-step process–

- a) Prepare,
- b) Shift,
- c) Transform, and
- d) Re-orient

We've dealt with the first two and each one of those has certain maneuvers that you want to keep a mental checklist to go through. In preparation, we had three basic steps, which were to settle down and center, the idea of intention and purpose for the trance, and finally the idea of getting resources. So the settling down was accomplished hypnotically just by getting the focus inwardly a little bit without any other purpose than to allow my attention to be absorbed inwardly and allow things to happen.

The intention was again, very interesting. Hypnotically, you didn't ask my conscious mind what I wanted, although that was part of the process. You allowed elements of that to be evoked, and then when my intellect wanted to take too much of a role in that process, you sidelined it again and said let's go back to the unconscious version of it, which is a much cleaner version, the purposeful, mental clarity, which is what I came up with in the end.

Finally, the idea of resources, which now feeds a third loop it's kind of like a feedback loop on itself three times around, where we came up with the vision of the Buddha, the Milton Erickson, the pattern of lights and energy, which I still don't have any idea what it means. That sensation, which was like an emotional awakening of an energy buzzing in my chest, was very pleasant.

So, when we have that phase complete, we now started moving to the second phase. The shifting of consciousness phase, which is the classical trance induction. Of course, technically, we've induced some kind of trances in the first few phases, but those are more like the warm-up exercises for the real deal.

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The things you were focusing on here were the three key maneuvers were the body sensations, the cognitive functions and the context it all sits in. Those are the three main directions you were shifting through in your trance phase.

Stephen: Yes. The example I was giving was primarily on the somatic dimension of relaxation.

Igor: Precisely. So we focused primarily there, with a little bit of cognitive, not so much with the situation other than what we brought into it already. We're beginning to move down those pathways, and I'm sure you'll be doing more of those with us. I'm just kind of pulling it out so people can listen on to the induction again and recognize the sequences.

Stephen: I just mention that because it may be, that a person presents in a very different way, which would require you to focus more on cognitive patterning and de-patterning.

Igor: So, for example, let's image – let's take a couple of mini case studies to see how we might switch things around. Let's say someone comes in who's got an eye condition. It's swollen and it's painful and his mind constantly goes towards that physical sensation.

◆ **I presume, would you start with the physical sensation as the shifting phase, or would you switch to one of the other two, like the context or the something cognitive in order to release the grip of where their mind is at already?**

Stephen: It's a practical question. Do you join with where the person is, or do you shift attention to something that's complementary? It would be easiest if you could just shift attention to something that's complementary because that opens the space.

Whether that is possible at a practical level is the million dollar question. So you try that. Go away from it, and they say no- no- no. They dig in deeper. Then that's feedback to you. Oh, we've got to go into it. But just as you mentioned in that example, my first curiosity is how are their hands feeling?

Igor: Right. So you're still work at the same somatic level, it's just you're moving to a different element of the somatic system.

Stephen: Yes.

Igor: Just to kind of pause on some of those maneuvers, which I think you mentioned again, very elegantly there. On the one side, the first idea is almost switching to a different system, like a mental functioning or the

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context or something like that if their mind will allow them to go there. If it doesn't, for example, if it's pain involved like in the example we just gave, their mind keeps coming back and being drawn back onto it. The second level might be staying in the same system, but seeing if it will go somewhere else, like sort of the eye will go to the hands.

Stephen: There's a beautiful example of this fellow who came to see Milton Erickson. He was a war veteran and he had lost his arm in battle and he was suffering terribly from phantom limb pain.

Igor: Of course.

Stephen: He said Dr. Erickson, can you help me? Erickson said anybody who has phantom limb pain is entitled to phantom limb pleasure as well. He taught this guy hypnotically how to have "phantom limb pleasure" in the other arm, the remaining arm. Of course, that in itself will create an interesting change if you have pain on one part and pleasure on the other. It's a different experience that just having all pain.

Igor: It goes again back to the theme that we talked about before that the unconscious allows both and thinking. I can have pleasure and pain at the same time.

Stephen: Yes. Some people like it that way.

Igor: Okay, so I think we've got a decent handle on those first two phases, the idea of the preparation shifting. I know you have many different maneuvers and as many layers of complexity that we can with just those two simple things already.

For the purpose of getting a complete sense of the model, shall we move on to the next phase which is, of course, the transformational phase, the bit where we now take the resources we've taken the time to discover? We use the trance state that's emerging, as a result, of this shifting process we've been going through and we start doing something practical with it or something transformative with it.

Stephen: This transformation phase, it presumes that you've gotten to a point where you've got some sense of what we're calling generative trance. If you remember, I said the generative trance has two levels to it. One is that it's an open space that's sort of an energy container that is capable of holding multiple contradictory experiences simultaneously.

Within that you also have this capacity for an intelligence other than your ego intellect to begin to relate things in new ways. That's the creative unconscious.

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So the creative unconscious is both this sort of agent, if you will, and it's a container. It's sort of the yin and the yang of the creative unconscious, so to speak. So within that space, this is why you would be doing an induction. If the steps for the transformation are—

1. Access the goal or the problem,
2. Access whatever resources that the unconscious selects out that are needed to be able to transform or achieve that goal,
3. Begin to weave fluidly multiple connections between the goal and the resources until you begin to develop, in essence, a new Mandala
4. Then you suggest in this transformation phase the integration, which is to take all of these new associational networks that have been developing and allow them to generate a whole new identity pattern.

So there are four steps in that process.

Igor: Perfect. So, we've got access the problem or goal. We have accessing the resources, the stuff we already dealt with in the first step. Then we do the weaving of bringing the things together so something new begins to emerge. Finally, the integration is going to be very important because that makes it part of their life rather than just an interesting experiential exercise that has no meaning.

Stephen: Well, it's literally what creates the new pattern. So up to this point, you're sort of nibbling at the edges, if you will. You're touching upon what you're talking about when you say this sensation in the chest, the lights, the sparkling lights, Milton Erickson. Those are all different pieces of the recipe, but the soufflé has not risen yet.

Igor: Right.

Stephen: Until the soufflé rises, we can't eat.

Igor: So we're stuck in the mixing bowl, and then the integration's putting the heat on to let it actually do its thing.

Stephen: That's right, and a lot of the hypnotic communications by the hypnotist are stirring it and weaving it and adding things until you find that the person's ready.

Igor: We're about to launch into it because I think probably the best way to talk about this is to give a demonstration. Before you do, can you give us a couple of simple ideas, themes that you like to use for people to listen out

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for when listening to the induction itself, so they have something to grasp onto. So, we've got the idea of resources and goals being woven together.

- ◆ **Are there any other themes that you like to pull out, or is it just a question of seeing what emerges?**

Stephen: Complementary is almost always there, which is to say that when I talk about one thing, usually the opposite is not too far away. The second thing is the word plays that begin to make multiple meanings.

Igor: Perfect.

Stephen: So you're trying to make sure that any symbol, any word is not restricted to a single understanding. Otherwise, the conscious mind begins to take over.

Igor: Okay, so we've got the idea of the combining the resources and the goal, and that maneuver is the idea of complementarity, so we have one thing and its opposite kind of chasing their own tail in many ways. Finally, I think a very important element is the multiple layers of meaning, just like in a dream.

We're not going to get locked into one interpretation, and the best way to do that or a simple way to do that appears to be using games and puns and so on, playing with language so that it has an instant hit of several levels at the same time.

Stephen: That's right.

Igor: Shall we do it? I think it's time for some mental clarity to ensue.

Stephen: Yeah, it's been a long time in the making, hasn't it, Igor?

Igor: Yes. The five minutes had to hold on for a whole 10.

Stephen: That's right. So we're sort of going back into this. So take a few moments and before you begin to go into a deep trance, just allow yourself to go just deep enough so that you can return to all the positive experiences. Some of which you're consciously aware of, some of which have just been waiting in the wings, and so many different wings can be able to take flight and be able to take off and be able to soar and be able to score.

In the middle, you can have the beautiful sense of mental clarity so that even with all of the different activities to your right and your left, up above you and down below you, you have an enjoyable sense of comfort right in the middle of nowhere and your unconscious mind, of course, does know where nowhere is.

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A place, in which you could be alone, so comfortably with just a void, free to allow you to experience all the spaciousness for mental clarity and you've been touching upon some of the different aspects that need to be integrated, that can be integrated, that can be woven together into a beautiful new pattern of self-expression.

As long as you're drifting comfortably in the middle of nowhere you can enjoy in your unconscious and peripheral mind all the associations to the right of you, the associations to the left of you and you can begin to sense that somehow there have been certain aspects of your creative process that have been separated out from each other.

They have really begun to come closer together and form a more perfect union, a deeper harmony. But even as you can feel to the right of you, there are certain experiential parts of your identity that are one part of the puzzle, relevant to the experience of mental clarity, and you can sense them, images, feelings, lights, people, places, different ages of Igor. Some of those ages may really surprise you in a curious way.

You really can't singularly focus on all those experiences to the right because you can begin to become aware also to the left side a different set of experiential patterns, a different set of experiential identities related to a whole different part of you, Igor. There. Over there, different ages beginning to come into the left side, and in the middle of nowhere you can feel something's beginning to balance something.

You really don't know exactly how your unconscious mind is beginning to do that. But because you've taken the time to go comfortably into a nice deep trance, now, you can also enjoy that your unconscious mind, since you're in a deep trance now, and begin to bring those different parts from the right side and the left side together towards each other, and begin almost like a magnetic force.

Something inside beginning to draw a beautiful image of an integration. That magnetic force pulls from the left and to the right. Something that's torn separated, beginning to draw coming into. You can feel your body is in the center of a vast field of deep experiential patterns and time that you feel that they come right to the center. You'll take a nice deep breath, deep enough to begin to allow a beautiful integration. That's good.

And you can take another minute of integration beginning now with those beautiful winds of change blowing your mind, beautiful sense of a weightless body, a weightless mind. A luminescent, clear as a bell, a day without clouds, a night with a full moon and a dream of further integration. An experience for the ages, past, present, future mental clarity of that beautiful place of your center.

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You can feel even now shooting stars come from a big bang integration, moving towards places in your future and tomorrow, the next day, the next week. Different places already there now in the future of continuing mental clarity. It really is such a nice thing, isn't it, that your unconscious mind has been able to guide us in this process today and knowing that the future of mental clarity is already here.

You really just relax deeper, and you sense from that place any simple commitments, any vows, simple promises that you want to remember about this wonderful importance of your unfolding emergent experience of mental clarity and of all of the different ways that it will apply to your life.

Take a few moments just to sit. Something beautiful has begun to develop from deep inside and can continue to develop. With that in mind, when you're ready, you can find yourself taking a nice deep breath that will allow you to transport – that's good – back out into the room. You'll remember oh my God, you're conducting an interview right now. That's right you're talking to thousands of people. Luckily, you're back just in time.

Igor: That was close.

Stephen: Welcome back.

Igor: Thanks for covering for me there, Steve.

Stephen: That's right. I had it all handled while you did your interplanetary travel.

Igor: That was a fine little travel. I was quite happy to go back.

Stephen: Yes. That's a little bit of an example of what it might be, and I just found myself coming up with that metaphor, finding a center point and bringing things in that had been disconnected into a creative integration.

Igor: It's very interesting you should say that because something else happened there for me, which is one of the ideas of coming back to this idea of the left brain versus the right brain and different types of functions. Buddhism, of course, focuses on right brain functioning and traditional, shall we say, self-hypnosis, although it focuses on that is kind of a left-brained activity because you're setting very specific goals and going after those.

It's interesting you started with above, below, left and right and so on, but somehow the theme of left and right stuck. That really worked for me. That was an essential theme, that's been running around in my mind.

Stephen: It has been?

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Igor: Yes. I like the idea of being the center of it because it's almost like this getting the integration of the two so it's not being exclusive again. There's this element of both that are of great practical value. It's a question of putting them together. Then the rest of the experience for me felt very much like I was drifting.

I wasn't trying to hold onto anything particular, just things that lit up and moved on and came together and moved apart. It was very pleasant. I can't really tell too much of it. It was more like waking up from a dream and knowing that something happened, but not quite putting your finger on what it was.

Stephen: That's trance.

Igor: Yeah. That's the power of it, right? It's the idea that the intellect doesn't have to do its work.

Stephen: That's right. It's your plan – what I'm suggesting is it's the Plan B for your consciousness. People say well, when should I go into trance? I say, go into trance whenever your normal ways of operating aren't getting the job done.

Igor: Because if they are, then there's no point in fixing it. So if they are actually already working, then there's no point integrating the conscious intellect if it's working. If it solves a problem be happy about it and go on with your life. It's not like you have to use trance for everything. It's the next step.

Stephen: The conscious mind is very important. It just has these limitations, and it particularly is limited, as I've been saying whenever you need to go beyond where you've been before, whenever you've got to go outside of the box. But it's good to know that at those times, there's Plan B, which is what we're talking about as trance.

Igor: I presume you also jumped in at the end there with the reorienting phase because there were some suggestions there about making them a vow of some sort.

Stephen: Yeah, so that fourth phase the return to the ordinary world, say there's a sense of what I call usually some self-appreciation. Just take a few moments to appreciate what you've done. What I've sort of replaced with post-hypnotic suggestions, how they're traditionally used, is I often use the idea of what's called the vows or commitments.

This is to have a sense that as you are in this place sensing what you learned today and what is now possible for you, just notice what kind of commitment you want to make to yourself in this special state in terms of

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how you want to bring this into your world. I find this to be more helpful than doing post-hypnotic suggestions.

Igor:

◆ **Can you elaborate on that?**

- ✓ How did you come to this idea and what does it that moved you more towards this kind of modified person or suggestion versus the traditional version?

Stephen: Well, one of the major differences between a generative trance and your traditional hypnotic trance is that a traditional hypnotic trance, basically, follows the structure where you knock the subject's conscious mind out and the hypnotist takes the conscious mind control. The conscious mind is there to – its intention – that's one of the things the conscious mind does that the unconscious doesn't do in the same way.

So, if the person has no conscious mind function, then the hypnotist has to give the post-hypnotic suggestion, which says something you experienced here in trance you'll experience or express after trance out in the world. That's the definition of a post-hypnotic suggestion. But in generative trance, we're having this double level.

So the observer self is not caught in the ego intellect. It's able to be there in this non-interfering witness place. Based on the experiences that have unfolded, outside of its control, it can then step in and say, this is what I want to carry into the world. The fact that it's coming from the subject, will make it far more likely to take in the person's world.

I think one of the problems traditionally with hypnosis is that oftentimes the charge has been levied that the suggestions work but they wear off after a while, to the extent that they're sort of like New Year's resolutions. To the extent that's the case, I think it's because everybody has what you might call a psychological immune system.

Everybody knows about the physical immune system and how the task of the physical immune system is to check out anything that's coming into the body, does it belong here? Is it part of my system? If it doesn't, it tries to reject it. I think we also have a psychological immune system that says these ideas that are being introduced into my identity system, do they fit with my identity or not?

So one of the problems with direct suggestion is they can burrow in there and have a temporary effect, but they often don't fit in terms of the client's psychological immune system. So they get rejected. So anything that you can do that's coming from the subject is going to make it more likely that the changes will be enduring.

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Usually the thought is, well the subject can't do it because if they go into that part of their mind, they'll go into the part of the conscious mind that usually is blocking trance. We're saying you know, that's just one way you could experience your conscious mind and it's unhelpful, but you can reorganize your conscious mind so it's part of this deeper system.

It's working in this complementary way to create what we're calling generative trance, which is a combination of traditional unconscious and conscious mind structures and processes.

Igor: Right and an idea that just sprang to my mind is you're doing a slightly deeper level, the same thing you did right at the beginning of the process in preparation, when you asked me to just close my eyes for a moment and get a sense of an intention for this. It was an intention that was in my conscious mind.

My conscious mind was involved, of course, you had the game plan in mind, but then we shape that into a more unconscious intent, which is more simplified and the resources that match that.

You're doing a similar sort of thing here where, sure, again, the conscious mind is involved, but rather than forcing an opinion onto this place, it's evoking an experience and going, yeah, that fits, rather than saying I want this and only this.

Stephen: So that bypasses the "resistance" because it's not me trying to say, this is what you should do, or this is how you need to think. It's saying, pay attention. Let's create conditions where you could really pay attention to have this deepest part of your intelligence that's trying to help you and then pay attention to how you can join with that.

I practiced Aikido for 15 years, which is so much like Ericksonian hypnosis. We were trained to blend with the unconscious, rather than clashing with it.

Igor: Right. So it seems almost like you're activating elements of the conscious mind without activating others. You're activating the purposeful, intentional, goal-oriented element of the conscious without analyzing the critical, analytical, rejecting information, finding flaws part that people bundle in the same bundle, but just because they're in the same ship doesn't mean that they're the same entity.

Stephen: Absolutely.

Igor: Excellent. So let's just recap, if I may, the things that you put into the reorientation phase, just so we have a very nice streamlined set of principles because there's a lot of stuff going on in here.

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Once you've gotten through the transformation phase, which was, of course, the idea of going in with a goal and weaving the goal and resources together, then you had the extra things of complementarity. The idea of having a complementary theme to bring into this world and finally word games to prevent the conscious mind from being too stiff about what the outcome should be, having multiple layers.

◆ What are the guiding themes that you're focusing on in a nutshell during the reorientation phase?

Stephen: I was just saying there's self-appreciation.

Igor: Self-appreciation's one.

Stephen: The vows and commitments.

Igor: So the vows and commitments. The new form of post-hypnotic suggestion is second.

Stephen: Yes, the future orientation.

Igor: Future orientation.

Stephen: Yes. It's saying, sense yourself in the future experiencing and doing these new patterns. For you, with you, I found myself talking about this metaphor of shooting stars and things moving, and that the future is already here, and you can look forward, and using words like today and tomorrow and next week, and they can continue to unfold and dreams and so forth.

Then reorientation and then any sort of discussion that would fit because what we're really emphasizing here is the whole technique is being co-created. It's not like a unilateral thing. So the most important thing for you is to get as much feedback as you can because that feedback is the suggestion that the client's unconscious is giving you about how the trance should unfold. So those are the basic parts of reorientation.

Igor: So when you would do this, the idea would be that you have almost like a niche or process where you do a small, one of these four-step loops and then you do another one and another one. Each time it gets more and more refined as the unconscious mind says oh, let's stay more towards the left today or let's stay more over to the right today. It unfolds in a bigger picture that way.

Stephen: Every one of the techniques could be done. There's a one-liner, or a three-hour technique.

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Igor: Right. So you can expand it or contract it according to time and context.

Stephen: Yeah, and like you were mentioning I started this theme of four directions, and I ended up in two directions. Well, something inside of me as I was speaking just shifted that. I thought consciously I was going to go in four directions, and something just said no stick with two.

Igor: Right and those were the right ones. They were exactly the right ones. The top and bottom I thought, oh, that's interesting, but I really have no investment or really care about them. But when you did left and right, each time you did that, that felt right. It felt good. Then it wasn't until towards the end of that transformational stage that I suddenly realized, hang on a second, he's kind of ignored the other two? What happened to them? Did I miss them?

◆ **You really did somehow pick up on something important, is that something that happens to you a lot?**

Stephen: I hope so. That's what I get paid for.

Igor: Right.

Stephen: I think it is a function of the relational connection and the resonance. We're holding this idea that the creative unconscious has this capacity far beyond the ego intellect, and if we really believe that, we had better be experiencing evidence of that in our own way of working with our clients. So everything that I'm saying as a hypnotist, I'm experiencing in the field with you. That gives me such a more exquisite fine tuning. I don't know any other place where I feel so fine tuned that I think is able to give a lot of direction in terms of how to proceed in a session.

That's based on a couple of things. One is the connection to yourself, the second is the connection to the client, and then third the connection to the relational space that you're holding together. I would say that the creative unconscious is not inside the hypnotist or the subject, but it's between the hypnotist and the subject. I think that's probably what was operating.

Igor: So what we're really talking about, going back to this idea we mentioned in the initial interview, which is this idea of an external trance, a hypnotist's trance which is what you bring to the equation, as the hypnotist. It's you're guiding the client to this generative space, but you have to go there yourself, and then between the two of you, you make sure that this space, which could go in any direction, comes a purposeful direction.

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Stephen: Exactly. Who was it that said wherever two or more are gathered in my name, was that George Bush? Something about that, that you are taking the challenge of the problem of the client, and you're transferring it to a larger, deeper, more creative context, which is this generative trance that is being mutually held and mutually created by the hypnotist and the subject.

So now the person doesn't have to try to deal with it in this isolated space, but it's this larger relational space, and your task as the hypnotist is to ensure a high quality of that state. That's what your job is. That's what you're studying.

Igor: In essence, we could say that we're coming back to this idea of personal power, this time emanating from the hypnotist, and in contrast to, shall we say the more classical or old school view, where the hypnotist is the power of the show and overpowers the client with his maneuvers. This kind of hypnotic power is a gentler power. It's still a power, which empowers the actual process. Rather than trying to overpower and tell the client which way to go, it empowers the process and helps to navigate it in a useful direction.

Stephen: Yes. The word learning has two different sources. One is instruction and the other is education. The root of the word instruction means to pack in. The root of the word education, educare, means to draw out. So what do you think would be a more helpful approach to learning? Whether you're packing in, putting in these suggestions – you will do this – or whether you're drawing out the creative intelligence that's already there.

Igor: I believe if you take that mindset, as a hypnotist, that's what makes hypnotic sessions easier for you, because you can't fail now can you? It's a question of just saying, what's here? Let's evoke it. Or let's polish this up a bit. Let's polish that up a bit. There's no fear now that you won't find anything because it's there already, rather than, oh my God, I've got to get an arm levitation and what if I fail, what if I can't do it, and so on.

You're just going in and saying well, what he is already exhibiting? What's he already go there? Let's polish this, let's polish that and if it comes up, great. If not, something better will come up.

Stephen: I was mentioning yesterday in the interview that Erickson's favorite words were I don't know. I would sit there and listen to people ask him, Dr. Erickson, just what is possible using hypnosis with this particular problem? He would say, predictably, I don't know. He would say that, and I would think, well, if he doesn't know, who the heck does? This guy is the great, great master.

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He would say the more I do this – which was 50 years and counting when I knew him – the more I do this, the more I realize that I don't know what the limitations actually are, but I'm very interested in discovering just what is possible for you here today. From there, it's let the games begin.

Igor: I think that's a very exciting idea, and one I know that you explore in Trance Camp, and one which we'll be exploring further in more detail in the second session. That's when we'll be focusing on, as you say, those games and beginning those. In my mind, I always envisioned it as the hypnotist's own personal journey to personal power.

Of course, you don't have to be a hypnotist to enjoy the places generative trances take you. But, if you're going to be or if you are aiming to be a Master Hypnotist it is important, I think, to take this journey of empowerment through these generative trances, because it releases within you insights or abilities that will help you, which will shape you and guide you as a hypnotist to be able to do better work.

Stephen: That's right.

Igor: So I look forward to speaking with you again on the next session, where we actually start exploring this fundamental trance that we've been building up today and see how we can explore that as a journey of exploration, a journey of empowerment for ourselves.

In the meantime, thank you so much Stephen, for coming on line and talking to us about that very simple, yet very sophisticated force, that process you have for creating this generative trance.

Stephen: You're welcome it's my pleasure. The Trance Camp, for those of you who didn't hear the first recording, is in July in the San Diego area.

Igor: Perfect.

Stephen: They can get all the information on the website.

Igor: Everyone, you can get hold of Stephen on StephenGilligan.com. My name is Igor Ledochowksi from StreetHypnosis.com and I will look forward to seeing everyone again on the third and final session.

Stephen: Thanks a lot.

Hypnosis Master – Stephen Gilligan

Seminar 2 – Part 1

Igor: Welcome to StreetHypnosis.com. My name is Igor Ledochowksi and I'm here with Master Hypnotist Stephen Gilligan from StephenGilligan.com, who's being interviewed today for the Interview with a Masters Series.

First, welcome back again, Stephen.

Stephen: Igor, hi. It's good to be back.

Igor: Again, I'm very excited today, because in the last session you did with us Stephen, you focused on this idea of this new kind of trance state. This genitive trance, which allows us to create realities that have never existed before, allows us to explore the potential within us either, to heal wounds emotional or physical or to just grow our personality and evolve as people and reclaim or build on our personal power as well. It's a very powerful process coming out of that.

Today, I thought it would be interesting to focus on the nature of these generative trances and talk a little about what it is that distinguishes these kinds of trances from regular hypnotic trances.

◆ **How can we start using them as practical tools for living our lives better?**

Stephen: I think one of the things we touched upon yesterday was this notion that first, the operational definition of generative is that you're able to create something that has never been experienced before. I would just point out that this sort of threshold is exactly where most people are when they come for some sort of important trance work. They're at places in their lives where they need to take a step into a new part of their life.

That could be something that's as straightforward as they were single and they got married, or they were married and they got divorced, or they lost their job, or they're going into a new area of their business or they're facing retirement. All of these are what you might call the classical life changes that occur across each of our life cycles.

Interestingly, these are precisely the places where symptoms are more likely to occur. So, there's something called the life changes checklist, which is a very simple straightforward pen and paper test where you give somebody a sheet of paper. On the sheet is listed these typical sorts of life changes that I was just eluding to and you ask somebody to check off how many of these have occurred in your life in the last six months or the last year or whatever.

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Then you count off the number of checks on that list, and it turns out to be predictive of who is most likely to have either a psychological or a physical symptom. It's very interesting.

So the way that we make sense of that is that those symptoms are trance states, and the trance states spontaneously occur whenever a person's old identity is lost for whatever reason, intentionally or otherwise. The reason then that the trance is negative we would say is because it has not been properly received and worked with by human presence.

We were saying yesterday that that's where hypnosis is thought of as different from trance. Trance is this deep experiential state that happens when you go outside the box of regular identity. Hypnosis is one of the human traditions, by which you give it a container you give it some guidance so that it can unfold in a positive way.

A generative trance then refers to a certain high quality state of consciousness that you're in by which you can receive these particular trances that allow that trance to be able to create some transformational shift that is really profoundly positive and has a person grow beyond their previous limits.

Igor:

- ◆ **What are some of the elements that we have to focus on in order to achieve this?**

It sounds like a nice big broad brush stroke in terms of we have some life changes, we have some symptoms that have become almost a path into these altered states, which allow us to grow.

- ◆ **What kinds of tools can we use or what kinds of things can we use to help us make that shift, make that transition?**

Stephen: Well again, we just look at what would be the quality of a high state of consciousness that would allow this trance experience to be positive? What we were talking about yesterday is that we can attune to three different levels of mind as I call it in the generative self-approach, and those are the somatic, the cognitive and the field mind.

So, what we're looking to do in order to develop a generative trance is to attune to each of those mental levels and move them to the highest quality possible. For example, somatically, we're talking about that would be a somatic state, an embodied state of consciousness that would have high levels of relaxation, concentration, fluidity openness and felt sense. If you are able to develop that and then just as importantly able to sustain that

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when the challenging situation is brought it, that will allow your connection to that challenging experience to be generative, to be really, really positive.

So just as an example, I was working with somebody not too long ago, and they had been sexually abused as a child and for various reasons, they weren't really able to deal with it throughout their childhood. They then got into a position where they started developing some resources and not too surprisingly some of these memories started to come back.

Well, what we're looking at is the memories aren't really a problem. They would be a problem or a solution depending on how they are received in a person's state of consciousness. So when the person comes and says this is a problem, we're not looking at the negative memory as a problem. What we're looking at is what happens to a person's state when the memory comes up makes it a problem for them.

Igor: So it's more how they react to the memory, rather than the actual memory itself.

Stephen: Precisely. What we look at is how we could attune a person's state at the somatic, cognitive and field levels so that as they relate to that experience, as they engage it, it becomes a transformational breakthrough. Again, this is sort of one of the underlying premises of Erickson's utilization principle.

You can do this with or without formal hypnosis, and I do it both ways, but what hypnotic work allows you to do is sort of get an amplified, more concentrated version of this.

One of the main emergent dimensions of a generative trance that would make it different from a basic trance and certainly different from what I would call a negative or symptomatic trance. The kind that people are coming in with when they bring in a problem is that you would have at least two distinct levels that would be operating simultaneously. This is something we were talking about earlier, I think in the first day interview.

The one level would be this sort of experiential witness space. A place where you could just be able to hold that memory without going into the wired-in responses of fight, flight or freeze. By the way, I think that's what makes something a problem, is that when the experience comes up and you go into fight, flight or freeze, the game's over. You can't do anything create at that point.

What we're looking to do in developing a generative trance is to add a fourth F, and you can probably guess what the fourth F is. Not that one. The fourth F would be flow.

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Igor: Of course. That's what I was thinking of, of course.

Stephen: Yes, of course. So what we'd be interesting in doing is first we're asking, would it actually be possible to establish a state where a person could actually invite that experience in, sort of have it to tea, if you will. Secondly, be able to sustain that state so that they could be able to use this experience in a healing way in a transformational way.

To do that, we say we have to have these two levels. One is be with the experience without becoming it. This is the deeper level, the generative level that begins to open up, be with it without becoming it. This is something that generally is implicit in a lot of basic hypnotic methods, but usually that state collapses when the problem shows up.

So in generative trance, we're looking to have this sense of sustaining that. You might say that allows you not only to witness it, it allows you a therapeutic differentiation. It's not a dissociation, it's a differentiation. To say I can see the memory is over there and I'm here, and I can extend my consciousness underneath it and open my consciousness around it. So I have what I would call three different levels.

I have this feeling of calmness and curiosity underneath. Then I have my relationship with the experience on the middle level. Then I have this space beyond, if you will, where I feel that my consciousness, my identity, my awareness is far greater than whatever this particular problem is. So I don't have to get locked into it or reduced to it or caught up in it.

That's maybe a little more specific. Then what we're looking at is, what does hypnosis allow you to do such that you can establish that very state?

Igor: So, at the moment, it seems like you're addressing some pretty fundamental issues around what our identity is, how we consider ourselves to be and our relationship to reality. What we think is real whether it's what this memory here means or what our place in the world itself happens to be, as a result of which this memory doesn't have to be a negative, but it can be an actual empowering thing despite it having been a negative event.

Stephen: Absolutely. It is how you connect with it. That's the basic idea of utilization. Sometimes that's easier said than done. I mean, some things are just so overwhelming that you get whacked before you know it. You sort of come to, whatever, hours or days later. If that happens, you know I get by with a little help from my friends.

I need somebody to help me get into that state and be able to help me monitor that state so I can sustain it, so that whatever the challenge is, I don't collapse into it, but I expand beyond it and I drop beneath it.

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Igor: There's a little trick and I say little trick, but it's actually quite a fundamental thing that Erickson used to like to do— I know you, yourself, also like to use it. It's this idea of using almost like teaching trances, using things like deep trance phenomena to teach an individual about how to reorganize our reality so by the time they actually have to confront the problem, their reality is different. Hence, their problem can't really affect them in the same way anymore.

◆ Can you talk a little about how you do that?

- ✓ How you use deep trance phenomena in relation to reality to help people expand their box of what can be real for them?

Stephen: In the naturalistic approach to trance, we see trance phenomenon as the basic psychological processes by which an experiential reality is created. Let me repeat that. What we're looking at are amplified forms of the basic psychological structures and patterns by which your sense of reality is created.

So your reality consists of memories. If you don't have a history, you won't have a personal reality. Your reality also consists of a sense of your future. Whether it's implicit or explicit, you have some sense that I have a future and some expectations about what that future might hold. You have, of course, integral to your sense of reality, a body and you have an experience of that body, and how you experience that body is integral to how you are experiencing reality. You have time, space, etc., etc.

What hypnosis does, perhaps more than anything else, is it amplifies what is already there. It takes sometimes, it takes a sensation, it takes an idea, it takes a possibility and by giving it this special kind of absorption and clearing out everything else, that particular dimension of reality gets amplified. So a trance phenomenon, such as age regression, would be an amplified version of the way that you use memory.

What we're looking to say to somebody in teaching them hypnosis is that you create your reality to a significant extent. What you experience as your life, you are the chief hypnotist. Now it may not seem like that, and certainly when you were growing up, it wasn't quite like that, but the whole notion of achieving self-mastery, of achieving real happiness, great health, good success in the world, the capacity to heal is predicated on this sense that I have the capacity to create my own reality. I have the capacity to create my own life.

So, what we're looking to do in hypnosis is let a person experientially realize that that's true. So usually in a problem state, a person feels the opposite. They feel, well, I've got these bad memories, for example, they happen to

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me and I can't do anything about it, so I better just give up. That would be an induction pattern for depression. That life is just happening to me. It's bad. It will always be like this. Therefore, I collapse into the trance state called depression.

So, if we want to help somebody to shift that around, one of the key ideas is you can experience – I mean one of the core ideas for hypnotherapy, actually I would say it's *the* core idea, is you have this basic form of suggestion or hypnotic idea. You can experience X in many different ways. Then you're figuring out, what is X? X for a person is whatever a key idea or a key pattern is in terms that are central to their reality.

Therefore, if a person is really attuned to their history, their memories, then we would want to introduce the idea in trance, you can be able to have a very, very positive relationship to your memories. We would look to develop various hypnotic experiences so a person could experientially realize just that. There are a lot of sub-ideas about that. You can change your relationship to different memories. You can always filter through your history to find positive memories that are resources. You can be able to have multiple memories at the same time, and so for and so on.

Now, once a person has experientially realized that. When they're faced with a reality in which memory is very important – that is, they've got some bad memories coming up – now they can use this new skill to be able to have a very positive relationship to their memories and be able to shift it from a victim psychology, if you will, to one in which they're generative.

So that's the basic idea. You have the capacity to experience or respond to X in many creative ways. Then we see trance phenomenon as some of the patterns that they can be able to master that will allow them to transform whatever reality they're engaged in.

Igor: So the deep trance phenomena on the one side, rather than searching for a specific one, you allow the unconscious to evoke one or promote one which will be the guiding force for them then to learn that they can master this. Then they can change their relationship to their body like, say with an arm catalepsy. In the same way as they can change their relationship with their memory or if its a regression that happens they can say well you've now experienced your memories in a different way, which means other memories will be different or other ideas can be experienced differently.

So you're always creating this almost an analogy between the mastery over the deep trance phenomena that emerges and a kind of mastery over whatever problems life happens to be throwing at them at that time.

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Stephen: Absolutely. You're looking at hypnotic trance as a metaphor, again, for how they live in the world. It's a microcosm for how a person is creating their whole reality in the world.

Igor: Right. Can we turn this towards a sort of practical angle? In the last session, you gave us a very simple but very powerful four-step process. A little formula, if you like, for using this naturalist approach for creating this generative trance.

- ✓ **Can we now take this idea of those four steps and the idea of a generative trance and add this idea of deep trance phenomena that we've just been talking about as a way of altering a reality and identity to allow a person to grow and evolve?**

Maybe give us a demonstration or example on myself, perhaps, on how this would look, how you actually do this in practice.

Stephen: So you're angling the interview to go back into deep trance I hear.

Igor: I am. I'm going to get all the free hypnosis I can.

Stephen: Fair enough. Absolutely. So we would start, if you remember, the first step was this sense of the preparation. So we might do it a little bit – we'll probably do it here a little bit more accelerated than I would actually do it, just to be able to touch upon some of the points. So you can be able, of course, to fill in the blanks.

You'll be able to connect the dots, to be able to see where this is going between the words and between the lines, even as we're talking just about a few of the important points. Do you think you'd enjoy doing that?

Igor: I think I would enjoy that very much.

Stephen: That's good. Since you're in the process of enjoyment, why not take a few moments to just enjoy being able to tune in, settle in and settle down. Now, the many different times in your life when you've been able to go into a trance Igor, I don't know which way of being able to go into trance, Igor, that your unconscious mind will begin to move into your body so that you can really begin to enjoy settling in, settling down.

Returning to this rather simple, this rather basic, but always such an enjoyable idea of what is it that you most want to be able to experience here in a trance today, a certain type of healing and certain type of transformation. You don't know and I don't know exactly which particular idea your unconscious can begin to bring into your mind now. Of course,

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yesterday we were talking about it could be an image, a word, a phrase. When you have one, you can just feel free to let me know.

Igor: I had a couple of things come up, some of which I have no idea what they mean. The first thought was the idea of self-mastery.

Stephen: Self-mastery.

Igor: In my life. In particular, the idea of confronting some fears. Then whilst you were talking about letting the unconscious find something, I had an image of like a grave opening up and I had a sense of the big one, of course, fear of death, which surprised me that this would come up.

Weirdly, this is the bit I don't understand at all was – which kind of morphed into kind of a cartoon figure of sort of an M&M sweet like thing with a cooking spoon and cooking chef hat. What that has to do with the others, I do not know, but it was there so I thought I may as well present it.

Stephen: That's usually a very standard image for trance.

Igor: The M&M trance.

Stephen: By the way, I don't know if I ever told you about how people used to be worried about Milton Erickson dying before he could give them therapy. When I was studying with him, he was old. His health wasn't good. He would overhear people's fears about death, and he would come out and say, I understand that a lot of you have been talking about the possibility of my death, but I want to assure you that will be the last thing that I do. Sure enough, he was good to his word as he said there are so many things I want to enjoy doing, each day, before that last thing.

Something about self-mastery and if we were working together, I would spend a little bit more time asking you to just let all the extraneous details – and by the way, those three different responses suggest to me that the relaxation needs to go a little bit deeper. The mind is going from this to that to that. It just means that the arousal level is still in the process of relaxing just a little bit more. Just a little bit more in terms of that sense of you can know in your heart of heart, it's something that you really want to achieve in your life.

When you find that, your unconscious mind will signal to you. You can keep that private, of course, by taking a nice deep breath that will be deep enough to allow you to shift to a little bit more of a different kind of a trance when you're ready. We were talking about resources yesterday, and here I'm going to just be curious about which of the different trance phenomenon your unconscious will mark out as especially relevant.

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I can mention certain possibilities and when I mention those possibilities, you may notice one of them getting brighter. You may notice one of your fingers lifting or your head nodding. You may notice a greater feeling of energy that will signal that's the one.

Igor: The one I have coming up now. As soon as you said something about a tingling happening in my hands, kind of a buzzing almost, it reminded me of the tingling and buzzing in my chest and something around that that just feels like the right thing right now.

Stephen: Yes and if it's okay, I'll just make some process comments for our educational experience. We're not in effect in the second session. So it's good to hear that that's repeating itself from the first session. It also is matching into the sense of when I hear you talk, it's often a fast clip in the tone of your voice, which is telling me that when you're thinking and talking, that you've got a tendency up until now to shut down a certain dimension of somatic knowing. What a nice thing to know that you've come to the right place today to do a lot of interesting somatic knowing.

What are the different hypnotic phenomenon associated with somatic knowing? We have some of the classic phenomena. That would be hand levitation, finger levitation. In California, we do full body levitation. You can be able to be curious. Many people sitting in Dr. Erickson's office would discover the pleasure of their hands lifting. I really didn't fully appreciate the therapeutic value of hand lifting very, very gracefully until I went to Bali and watched the trance dancers in Bali. I went every night for two weeks. I didn't miss it. Watching people do trance.

It was a beautiful different type of feeling and different type of movement and different type of understanding of the body's relationship to creative intelligence in trance, in your intimate relationships, in your professional life. I really don't know exactly how your unconscious mind is going to teach the two of us here today the particular way that your body – that's very, very good.

Your hand is lifting, and I'm wondering as it's lifting how much grace that your unconscious mind can be able to infuse, transfuse. You don't have to refuse. You can defuse. You can be able to form trance phenomenon gracefully, like a Balinese dancer. While your hand is moving, it is a nice metaphor, is it not? What is a metaphor? Gracefully touching, curving, shifting and when you're ready, you can begin to go deep enough so that you can begin to insert, relate, transfer those different patterns of creative somatic hypnotic experiences into those parts of your life where you're searching for self-mastery, clarity, peace. That's good. That's good.

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I can see and mention your hand went down. You can be able to enjoy that first round, and your head's moving back to a certain position, which I would just use as an indication your unconscious completed something there. There are so many different circles, closures, openings in a trance.

Why not make this one a good place to take a deep breath and then, when you're ready you can recognize that's the first round. Before we go to the second round, maybe it would be a nice thing to come back into the room and we can be able to talk about this, be able to find out how much you have begun to experience so far. When you're ready, you can let your eyes open. Hi, Igor, how are you?

Igor: Hey, good.

Stephen: Take a moment to reorient and let me know what you experienced there.

Igor: That was a good. Well, first I had that tingling and buzzing and my hands got hot and sweaty.

Stephen: Hot and sweaty?

Igor: Yeah. It was almost like an uncomfortable buzzing. Kind of like it's okay to go somewhere uncomfortable without actually losing yourself to it entirely. As you were talking about something else, I felt my thumb starting to levitate, which is an interesting starting point.

Stephen: By the way, that report you just gave me about almost uncomfortable that tells me a place where when we go back to that, we want to insert some resources and increase the quality of the state so that you could have a wider, more comfortable space to be able to experience that very pattern again.

That's part of what your responsibility as the hypnotist is, is to observe any places where the self seems to be potentially overwhelmed and before proceeding, make sure that there are more resources and a higher quality of state, so that the same pattern when you return to it is now in a very different state. So go ahead. Was there more?

Igor: Yeah, I felt kind of my head started to bounce and jerk around a little bit, kind of like a nodding. Almost like an energy was in the neck just moving around, but not quite the same as the buzzing that was in my hands before and then I lost track of a whole bunch of things. I think eventually, I ended up feeling my hand touch my face.

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You were talking about relaxing deeper, and it almost sounded like a suggestion, like I could let go of the hand. As the hand went down, I just relaxed all the way into that place and just drifted. There was a lot of drifting going on. Not like I'm thinking of anything in particular. It's just I'm drifting through and things are happening.

Stephen: Yes. I'll make another process comment, if that's okay with you.

Igor: Yes.

Stephen: There's a lot going on in the body, and my job is to assess the degree of comfort and general stability of all of that experiential process. I'm thinking we could probably introduce something that would be a good stabilizer and would allow all that shake, rattle and roll to occur, but also to have the person connected to something that's very stable and comfortable that's outside of them.

The thing that comes to mind for me – I don't know if it will be the best thing for you – is I started to get curious about an image of a positive future that you could develop away from your body. To the extent that, that was possible, like across the room or something, you could develop this double consciousness, which again is one of the beautiful things about a generative trance, is you could have simultaneous points of reference.

You could have two bodies in the room. You could have two different times. You could have two or more different experiences. So I would be very curious about having a positive away from the body hypnotic phenomenon.

Igor: What just happened there was very interesting. As we were speaking and before we mentioned the idea of a future non-body phenomenon, I felt my fingers start tingling again, almost uncomfortable but not quite. Suddenly, somewhere along the line, I can't quite say when, it just released that feeling of tension in my stomach just releasing with it. It was almost like, whilst we're talking about it now, sort of half out of trance something continuing.

Stephen: Yes, of course.

Igor: Just kind of like saying yes, you're on the right track. It feels good. It feels almost like I want to have that uncomfortable sensation again just to know that it will release again and that cycle of tension release is something I can do.

Stephen: Yes. Steve Deshazer, who sort of based his solution-oriented work on Erickson's work, had what he called the miracle question. This is a very ingenious simple question, and it was based on Erickson's future orientation in time hypnotic technique, where a person would say well, I have this

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problem. Erickson would hypnotically orient the person into their “future,” depending on the nature of the issue.

He would have them see in that future that they had gotten over the problem and notice what it was like to not have the problem, and then to look back and to see what they did to get through the problem. It was a very, very interesting thing.

This again, on this topic of trance phenomenon, this would be moving into the induction phase. What would it be like, to let your unconscious give you a sense of the future that you would most like to experience? The way I would like to simply suggest that is that as you close your eyes, that you can go deep enough so that you can let an image begin to float out in front of you over there across the room and be able to see yourself in a very, very wonderful way in the future.

In the martial art of Aikido, we often use the two-step process of dropping to your center, which is another way of saying, go into a trance, but then the second part is open into the field. Open into the field. Let your mind begin to extend out in front of you. When you do see – and you may see it only at an unconscious level for right now – you feel your finger tingling again. That’s good. That’s good. That’s very good.

So that you have a very nice positive image of your future, and you can let me know by letting your head nod. That’s good. And you can be able to let yourself be very attracted, sometimes you become so fascinated with something, that you just feel all of your attention completely drawn towards that image.

As you’re drawn to that image you’re going to recognize that your body in trance is beginning to transform from trance, to shift through all of the different somatic trance phenomena, so you can begin to let your body, the way you feel, the way you move, the way you think shifting. So that as you feel drawn every day towards that positive future, you can feel how your body is beginning to reorganize.

To be able to be in the best way so that really that deep healing transformation in your body is it a mirror for that future, or is it the future that is mirroring you? Is it the chicken before the egg, or the egg before the chicken? You can just be so fascinated that something is drawing you in such a fascinating way every day, now you can say every day you can feel that nice attraction, and your body can release. Your body can let go. That’s good. That’s good, Igor.

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Your body, your heart, your belly, your body as you felt it when you were five years old, 15, as you feel it now, as you sense it shifting more to be in accord with that future self so your mind can be detached from your body, and so deeply absorbed in your body at the same time. Feel that sense moving towards that future. Fascinating. It's very hard to even think about turning away. It just draws you.

That's a nice thing to know that you're tuned to that future, and your body can go through so many different trance phenomena in the days ahead. As you continue this beautiful reorganization of your body and mind to be in accord with this amazing future.

Now when I was 20 years old, I was staying in Erickson's guest house, and I saw a book that was out of print that he had published, and I had been looking for that book. In the next session, I said Dr. Erickson, I noticed in the guest room there's this book. May I buy a copy from you? He said that book's out of print. I have 26 grandchildren why should I give you one? I summoned up all of my courage and spoke.

What I wanted the most of all at that time, I said in the space of two years, you can imagine the space of two years, I'm going to be the best hypnotist in the world. You can imagine what it is that you most want over the next two years. Erickson looked at me for what seemed like days and days, and I used all of my attention.

You could feel my body going through so many different hypnotic experiential processes. I leaned over and he went on the intercom and asked his wife to bring a copy of that book. She brought the copy, and he wrote in a purple felt pen, to Stephen Gilligan, you made a solemn promise, and he handed it to me. It's nice to know that you can make a commitment to a future at such a deep level, that all of your thoughts, all of your dreams, all of the people that you choose to relate to.

The ways that you read into your work, the ways that you take time to hypnotically explore yourself, all are drawn along the lines of that simple path that you know. That's good. It's now within in. I see you've taken a nice deep breath and by the way, for the folks at home, that's usually a good sign that there's just been integration, a completion. That's the unconscious mind's way of saying okay, that's a wrap.

By the way, speaking of wraps, if you want to wrap that delicate sense of your future self in a beautiful sheathing, a beautiful translucent sheathing so it's like a body of light that's protected inside of you, guiding you each day, you can delicately, lovingly be able to care and feed and enjoy your future that's already within you.

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When you're ready, you can take a nice deep breath and come on back out.
That's a nice deep breath, Igor.

Seminar 2 – Part 2

Stephen: Okay, we're back in the Interview now.

Igor: Wow! That was great.

Stephen: Go ahead.

Igor: Again, it was interesting. I still feel a little tingle, a little buzzing, a little lightheaded from it, but that's in a good way. I tell you, the vision of the future I had, there was a lot of energy in it in terms of more vibrant and I already think of myself as being, and the colors were very intense.

It was very appealing, but at the same time, at one point I thought what if it's too much, and the big shift, the integration you were talking about it at one point, of becoming aware was kind of just the flipside. That was almost like a vibrant neon sort of everything's alive, everything is exciting.

The flipside of that was almost like a calmness, which happened from the inside. So you can have both the energy and be calm at the same time. A real sense of calmness coming through that, and that was very, very – that was a lot of fun.

Stephen: Yeah, that's a very beautiful example of the way that your internal dialogue can operate quite differently in a trance state. That is, when you came to that point of concern, I wonder if it's too much, in a non-trance state that would often be a trigger for worrying or pulling back for doubts. So if I'm hearing you correctly, your unconscious responded to that genuine curiosity by supplying spontaneously the complementary part of it, the calm.

That's one of the things about a generative trance is that things spontaneously, because of the quality of the state and the holding of the simple intention, will begin to move along those lines of always providing a balance and a complement and so forth and so on.

Igor: I also find it very interesting how there's like a theme developing, even between trances. Not just in today's session. We've had two or three mini ones and then that bigger one just now, but also from what we talked about in the previous session, the idea of clarity of mind and so on. It's all kind of feeding in at the same direction.

Stephen: It is. Yes. That's right. So you had clarity of mind yesterday, and something about the calm vibrancy of the body today.

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Igor: Exactly and they feed into each other kind of perfectly. It's almost like we're working through the three stages that you talked about. The cognitive, the physical...

Stephen: You're a very cooperative subject, Igor.

Igor: It's working for me, so I'm not going to resist it.

Stephen: Yeah, I'm really kidding because these distinctions really of somatic, cognitive and field came out of just a long many, many years of doing these types of experiences and finding what would be the different pieces that would make for a whole self that would be capable of transformation and healing at any given moment.

I really want to point out also that these pieces are not suggested by the hypnotist; namely, me.

Igor: Right.

Stephen: They really come from your own experience.

Igor: What's interesting is from looking at the idea of going in for a deep trance phenomena, we had several of them. The arm levitation, of course, the buzzing and tingling sensation all over the skin and body and particularly inside the body as well. Then, later on the sense of something releasing into a feeling of calm, which is again, a body sensation that I wasn't expecting at the time. None of them really were directly suggested by things you were saying.

It's almost like the stories you were talking about were keeping the engine running, so to speak, while something else was happening inside.

Stephen: That's right and I totally say, the unconscious has a creative intelligence, and we're looking to provide the conditions so that it can be able to guide both the subject and the hypnotist. It's a far cry from the traditional way of thinking about hypnosis.

Igor: Another thing I experienced in that particular kind of trance was that you offered many different kinds of experiences. Again, two things; one was many of them just sort of flew by one side and the other, which is interesting, but then one of them really caught my attention, the story about two years in the future and, of course, you with Erickson. That grabbed my attention.

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It's kind of interesting again, the same thing we talked about a previous session happened here again. You had lots of little things happening that were interesting but weren't really that interesting to me to want to hold onto, but when that theme evolved and I really just said oh, I hope it runs with this because I'm liking this.

Something about this is clicking with my experience and again, you did exactly the same thing again. You went down that path for much longer than anything else, which was exactly the right theme for me to experience at that time.

Stephen: That's great to hear. We're thinking of presenting suggestion through all possibilities. We're assuming that most of what we suggest won't be relevant to a person. It's like if you're a basketball player, you shoot 50%, you're an all star. If you're a baseball player, you get a hit three times out of 10, you're an all star.

So this notion of putting all your eggs in one basket that you will experience this is a really unnecessary and unhelpful and silly idea. The whole nature of suggestion is presenting the general idea. You can experience (X). Suggesting some possibilities. It may be this way, that way or this way and then seeing which ones come out of the person.

Most often the most important ones are not ones that are suggested by the hypnotist. Those are the ones that will tend to have the most meaning, but during this time what that requires is to return to a point from yesterday, is the relational connection between the hypnotist and the subject has to have deep rapport. There's a sense that the unconscious mind is being held between you, not inside of either of you.

Again, if that sounds too esoteric, think about any intimate relationship where there's a we, a you and a me. Or, think about when people are doing anything creatively, athletically or artistically. There's that sense of a field mind that opens up. I think that's what is guiding me. So you're saying, well, there was that story about two years in the future. I'm sort of putting out different possibilities, and then just noticing where the resonance in my field increases and tending to go with that.

I'm not assuming that that's infallible. It's just one helpful system, but at the same time, we're assuming. I don't know exactly what's best for you. You have to teach me in each moment. My job is to be taught in each moment, to be flexible enough so that I can turn on a dime, that I can shift, but what I do know is that there are these qualities of the generative state that I have an aesthetic sense of and a technical sense for how to create.

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So, if you give me any parts of your experience, I have a way of sensing how to work with it hypnotically so we can upgrade the quality of your experience so that it will be generative. I hope that makes sense.

Igor: Yes and it's something that struck me as well, especially as you were talking about that now. It's the idea that, some people call it going first. The idea that, as a hypnotist, if you make a point of actually putting yourself through these different generative trances, the more you experience them for yourself, the more when you start using hypnosis with somebody else, your flexibility is wider.

Hence, when you talk about turning on a dime, that ability becomes more natural because you're in the right state to observe and get feedback from the client. But, you're also at the same time in an empowered enough state where you're flexible and creative because you're in the same kind of zone to be able to create that zone for the other person.

That's where a lot of the magic can happen without your having to try to plan it. The experience will help shape you, and the more you build the ability to go to that place yourself inside your own mind, the more the magic flows out of you more naturally.

Stephen: Well said. I think this is really one of the things that was at the base of Erickson's brilliance.

Igor: Right.

Stephen: Gregory Bateson, the great anthropologist who was the guy that introduced us to Erickson, knew Erickson for 50 years. When Bateson was an anthropologist married to Margaret Mead in the 1930's, they were going to study the trance rituals in Bali, which I was alluding to in the trance. They thought before they went they should learn something about trance.

So, they went and consulted with this young psychiatrist who was already legendary in Detroit, Michigan named Milton Erickson. He was already legendary for his connection to trance. Through the 50 years, Bateson and Erickson were very, very close friends. A lot of Erickson's students were first Bateson's students.

Bateson was kind of a grump guy, very aristocratic English academic Buddhist type. Somebody asked him in the late '70s, what do you think about all this work that's being done about Milton Erickson? Bateson said harrumph. I think it's shoddy work. It has a terrible misunderstanding of Erickson, and I totally disapprove of it. The person said well, can you say more? He said well, Milton Erickson, before he allowed himself to think first entered into a system so completely and so thoroughly that he was thinking

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within the weave of the total complex of that system so that when he began to think, his thinking was coming from the inside of the system. So it was always there to honor it and to let change occur from the inside out.

So when people studied Erickson, they typically studied him from the point of view of just an external observer doing techniques on somebody. It reduced it to a bag of tricks or a game of technique. Like a lot of things Bateson said I think it was an absolutely brilliant, wise observation that he made and something that I'm trying to emphasize here.

To respect a person, to honor the person and to have the best success for hypnotherapeutic work, you have to take this time to really connect with the person, feel within the system and realize I need to be guided by them. That's the basis. I need to let the solution unfold from within them. To the extent you do that, there's no resistance.

Igor: Now I know this is a particularly important point because this is really the key theme of all the Trance Camps. I know the overarching theme sometimes changes. Sometimes the hero's journey, sometimes you have another thing you emphasize, but underneath it all there's always this idea of number one, enter a generative trance several times throughout the period of several weeks so you get the process down on yourself and learn from it.

Number two make it interactive so you're with other people at the same time, partly so that your skills as a hypnotist improve, but also partly so that you learn to have that within yourself as you deal with life so you can flow smoothly in and out of these trances as life comes at you.

I guess the final question I have that's in my mind for these sessions – and you've really given us a lot of value that we've gone through so far.

The idea I have in my mind is will you be able to give us an experience, like an open-ended self-hypnosis session that people can listen to, to enter this generative trance for themselves? It's one thing hearing about generative trances. It's another thing, hearing you guide me through these experiences, shake around my specific experience, which I think in itself is very valuable, but now for the people who are listening to this to actually have an experience of it for themselves.

◆ **Could you take us maybe 15 or 20 minutes through a little guided meditation?**

A guided generative trance that will let people feel for themselves what it's like to be there, and if they choose to go to Trance Camp, know what it will

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be like for however long they decide to be there for their journey, to know what kind of experiences they can expect.

Stephen: Well, as you know, there are many different types of experiences in Trance Camp. I just gave you in the demonstration some sampling, if you will. Here's a little sort of self-hypnotic piece that is sometimes how I might introduce trance to people. It's very, very simple. You may be familiar with it it's called three point attention.

Igor: Okay.

Stephen: The three point attention is named properly, because it involves attuning to three perceptual points, making it a triangle and then holding a question or an intention. Then, seeing how you can use that three points to shift out of your conscious mind open to the unconscious and then see what sort of generative symbols and solutions the unconscious begins to give.

I'll walk you through a little version here.

Igor: That would be great.

Stephen:

1. The first step is, as we have been doing so far, we just sort of claim a space.

You sometimes see a dog at night before they settle in, they turn around once and then twice and then three times. I won't ask you to do that, but I'll ask you to enjoy discovering the moral equivalent of settling in and settling down.

That means that at home or in the office, locking the door or just trying to create a place where you're not going to be disturbed, that this is your time. Then you just take a few moments to take a few breaths, to being to mark out I don't have to perform for anybody else right now. I don't have to think about my performance tomorrow. This is a time just for me to explore some very, very interesting possibilities.

Just do a few breaths. Different people have different ways. It might be a word or a symbol. Some people like to put their hand to their heart or their belly, just as a way of attuning, nothing fancy.

2. The next step about intention for the three point is just sensing a simple intention in five words or less, what I'd like to be able to create in my life is (what). It could be an image.

What I'd like to create in my life is (what)? Just see what comes.

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We were talking in the last session if you have two or three or four, usually that means you need to settle down a little bit more. Be in that state so that you can pick one. Just pick one. Okay, I'll pick that one.

3. Then the third step of the first part, you're just sensing are there any presences or any experiences, any parts of you in your life that you want to use as resources.

Friends, memories, historical beings, family members that you know really support you in being able to have these deep, incredible experiences of learning. That's the preparation. Now the induction is also quite simple. Here's where the three points of attention are. Let yourself put your hands on your lap, on your legs so that they're spread apart from each other, one hand on one leg, one hand on the other.

Let your eyes be at least a little bit open. You have soft eyes so that you begin to attune, so that you concentrate on both hands simultaneously, equally at the same time. At first, you may find your attention shifting back and forth. Discover what you have to do in terms of letting your eyes relax, letting your body relax so that you can see both hands equally, simultaneously.

Most people begin to see them equally, begin to feel there is a shift in the body field because any time that you begin to widen to your peripheral attention, it means your conscious mind is beginning to dissolve into your creative unconscious mind. It's getting wider and a very comfortable feeling is spreading all around you.

To really concentrate on those two hands. They may seem detached. They may change colors. They may simply be warm. Give all of your concentration to the two hands, once you feel that, then it's time to add a third point, an imaginary point that completes the triangle.

That can either be, in front of you really concentrate and a third point that completes the triangle the two hands and a third point. Or, you may find a point inside of your body in your belly that allows you to develop a triangle with the third point inside of your body. Whatever it is, begin the process of concentrating deeply and yet with complete relaxation. How is that possible to concentrate so deeply that every muscle begins to relax? That's good.

As your muscles relax, you can find yourself concentrating, and they may not even feel like physical points, but points of light, luminous points, like you were talking about earlier. Whatever they are, let your attention spread wide to the triangle, drop down, open up, stabilize, relax.

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Once you've done that, that's a simple induction. Call that the anti-anxiety because you find that any thoughts that come up, worries, you can just concentrate a little bit deeper so that 100% of your attention is flowing, feeling, opening, attuning to that triangle. When you feel that, you can begin to let that intension, that question, how can your unconscious mind be able to create an experience starting now that can begin to lead you into the realization of that goal?

You can keep your awareness focused on the three points and begin to feel softness, an opening, a deep space opening through the triangle, down as if through a deep well, down into the super conscious mind, down beneath the surface, down in your awareness, and you can feel that you don't have to go down. You can let your unconscious mind reach down.

You can concentrate on the three points so that you can feel that what goes down must come up and when your unconscious can begin to draw from your super conscious mind images, experiences, begin to filter up and drift up through the well, through the triangle into your consciousness, beginning to form a nice trance. That really can be able to allow you to realize your deepest dreams, your simplest goals.

Your mind drifts, and you can just remember to concentrate on the three points. Release all of the tension. Be curious about letting the unconscious lift up from deep within the super conscious mind. Lifting up from deep within different experiences like laying down cobblestones of a new path, walking in your future, supplied through the super conscious mind and moving through the golden triangle of your unconscious mind.

You can see it move through you and see your thoughts moving beyond you, creating something beyond you, a future you. A beautiful sense of the future you that is already in your future now. It may even turn at some point and wave to you. It may turn at some point and gesture, this way. You can see that it all comes from the super conscious, through your unconscious, through your body, through your conscious intention, into your future to enjoy a beautiful, amazing life. What more could one possibly ask?

So may you continue to be a clear and beautiful channel. May you continue to use trance to attune, to align and sense the simple positive thing that you want to create in this lifetime. As it's helpful to you, helpful to others and enjoy getting out of the way of the unconscious mind, be able to flow through you and unfold a very wonderful life.

Seeing all of that, seeing how it flows through you as a body of light is channeled, as it relaxed the positive consciousness, creatively working. You can take a few moments just to say thank you and express your gratitude to

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yourself, to that beautiful creative presence that really wants to help you be a happy, healthy, healing, helpful human being.

Thank all the presences in your life that support you, that want to help you. So may you use trance always for those positive purposes. To help yourself and others live with more happiness and more health, with healing. With that in mind, you can just take a few moments. Anything that you find that's delicate inside of you that needs a gentle wrapping up, needs a sense of protection, you can give a nice beautiful sheathing so it has a nice safe place inside of you. It's safe for you. It's safe for it to continue on its process.

Then when you're ready, you can take a nice deep breath and reorient back into the room, so when you open your eyes, you really can be completely out of the trance, and realize, well, that's nice.

Igor: And it was nice.

Stephen: It's nice to just take a few moments to review usually.

Igor: Okay.

Stephen: Then you really want to take the time to sense whatever happened, it made sense. You're just trying to learn and gratefully receive whatever the experience that your unconscious gave you, and realize your responsibility, whether you're doing self-hypnosis or if you're doing hypnosis with somebody else, is to provide the best possible place so that the message can come through in a high quality positive way. So that's what we're trying to do.

Igor: Then, when people come out of the self-hypnosis session, like the one you just did which was a very nice process, do you recommend they just sit there for a while and let their mind just ruminate on whatever things happened there, whatever images came up or experiences they had? Then, after a few minutes just say that was the experience I was meant to have had and then, get on back with the normal regular day-to-day stuff.

Stephen: That's a wrap. Thank you. Then get on with the conscious mind world.

Igor: Right, which is an important place to be, of course.

Stephen: It is. We're looking for a life that has a good balance between being active and participatory and the external world and deeply connected to the internal world.

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Igor: Right. So, we're coming to the end of this session. Again, Stephen, I'd like to thank you for all the input you've put here just a little summary of the stuff that we've been covering. We've looked at how generative trances can be used or explored in many different ways to create a richer experience of life and a richer identity, a richer reality in which we live.

We used essentially the same process that you introduced us to in the previous session to now start focusing on an intention, a personal growth of some sort, and the maneuvers were pretty much the same maneuvers, but now we're more enriched and allowing the trance to unfold. It's more kind of a maintenance system to let the trance carry on doing its thing.

At the end of that we did the same principle, kind of re-packaged into a self-hypnosis process, but essentially we're talking about, they're going into the same space, a generative trance again. The same attitudes still count, which means we start by allowing intention to arise. We create the trance experience itself using the three point attention that you've just taken us through, and then allow experiences to emerge out of that and just being curious about what comes, accepting it without trying to reject anything, and the big question always being, this obviously is meant to be.

This is important. It's a healthy part of the next step so I'm just curious about how that's going to unfold either now in this session, or maybe as the weeks turn into months as my life continues, and that thing begins to have more and more meaning.

◆ **It's essentially the same mindset is it not, between self-hypnosis or hypnosis on other people?**

We're just now applying it to ourselves and being a little bit more focused on ourselves.

Stephen: Yeah, it is. It's the same process. What we're saying about generative trance is that built into it is this sense that it's all self-hypnosis in the sense that you are asking the person in the client position to begin to understand that they're the hypnotist. So you're sort of sitting in for a little bit, modeling for them how to have a relationship to their unconscious that is able to operate what I call with the Erickson function. The Erickson function means how to be able to accept and utilize whatever comes out of the unconscious for a positive outcome.

Igor: Right. Again, that takes us right back to the beginning again, which is this is what Trance Camp is really all about lots of different experiences. You've, of course, given us a nice little selection of the kind of experiences that happen in Trance Camp. Trance Camp is three weeks, up to three weeks. You can do one week at a time, if you wish to.

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This has just been three hours, so there's a balancing act we have to do here, but I think you gave us a very nice slice of experience, of ideas, of techniques that we can use to experience and take more generative trances into our own lives and actually get some value out of that. For that, I really want to thank you, Stephen.

Stephen: My pleasure.

Igor: For everyone that's listening, if you have any questions or you want to get more involved in Trance Camp, of course, I've been talking to Stephen Gilligan from StephenGilligan.com, and the seminar you're looking for is Trance Camp. That's what this whole session has been based around, where the ideas have been coming from. Stephen, as you noticed, is a very friendly and a generous person, so do look him up if you want to.

My name is Igor Ledochowski, and this has been the Interview with a Hypnosis Master Series for StreetHypnosis.com. Thank you, everyone, for listening in. I look forward to meeting you again on the next session.

Hypnosis Master – Stephen Gilligan

End of Seminar

On that final note, everyone, as much as I hate to say this, this is the end of this particular session. We will be back again with another master next month.

Until then, I've been talking to a true hypnotic genius, Hypnosis Master Stephen Gilligan from StephenGilligan.com. My name is Igor Ledochowski from StreetHypnosis.com and I look forward to speaking with everyone again in the next session.

Meet Your Host

Each month's Interview with a Master will be hosted by Igor Ledochowski, a master hypnotist of international acclaim. He is regarded as one of the world's foremost experts and trainers in conversational or covert hypnosis.

Igor created the Private Hypnosis Club, the world's first community for master hypnotists.

He was the first ever hypnotist to release a full audio course on Conversational Hypnosis, the latest version of which is 'The Power Of Conversational Hypnosis' and is the No. 1 best-selling hypnosis course in the world.

Igor is also the creator of over 30 other advanced hypnosis programs. All his programs are available from:

www.StreetHypnosis.com