

# HYPNOSIS MASTERS



## SERIES

*How To Conquer Uncertainty And  
Find Never-Ending Inspiration To  
Radically Improve Your Hypnosis*



# Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

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# Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

## Welcome

### Welcome To The Hypnosis Masters Series

In this series you will be getting interviews and special seminars from some of the worlds 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: John Overdurf



John Overdurf has a degree in psychology. He started his professional career focusing on drugs & alcohol abuse and family therapy. Soon he turned to Ericksonian Hypnosis and later NLP in order to find the tools he needed to become more effective in his work.

John's new work started to make a dramatic difference in the lives of his clients, and soon he became known as the "Therapists' Therapist"!

He started to consult in 6 colleges and set up the first drug & alcohol wellness program in the area.

In 1990 he started a very successful teaching & training company for NLP & Hypnosis. He has been innovating approaches to NLP & Hypnosis ever since!

# Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

## Introduction

Welcome to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski and what you're about to hear is a very special interview with Master Hypnotist John Overdurf, which was recorded for us at a Private Hypnosis Club as part of our interviews with the Hypnosis Masters Series.

As you will hear, John is not just a Master Hypnotist he's also a Master Innovator in this field. John's interview and seminar will take us on a fascinating tour through advanced hypnotic principles, the secrets behind advanced covert hypnotic language patterns, as well as other hypnotic innovations and special insights that can turn almost anyone into a genuine master of hypnosis.

Listen on at the end of the interview to discover how to get your hands on over five hours of seminars and interviews revealing his fascinating insights.



## Interview – Part 1

**Igor:** Welcome to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski and I'm here with Master Hypnotist John Overdurf from [JohnOverdurf.com](http://JohnOverdurf.com). I'm very excited actually today to introduce you to this Master Hypnotist, because John is who I would, amongst all the people I've experienced and worked with, consider to be my mentor who has really guided me. I've learned most of the really cool things from John himself.

You'll see as we talk about the interview today and the seminar portion of the interview, which comes later. You'll really see that John has a unique view, conception of the mind and hypnosis, as well as, how all that stuff works together.

It's refreshing, it's powerful, and all I can say is you're in for such a treat in this Master class that I'm excited for you and actually for myself as well because I know I'm going to get lots of stuff out of this too.

With that lovely introduction, John, welcome aboard.

**John:** Well, thanks a lot Igor and for the lovely introduction. I feel honored and privileged to be doing this with you too because you're a true shining star. When you proposed the idea, I thought this is a really neat idea for us to do together, and I'm really looking forward to it.

**Igor:** So am I, and as I said to everyone on the call I know we've had lots of conversations over the years and of course, also setting up these interviews also a little bit. I know for a fact there's going to be some interesting gems coming out of this that I'm going to take away, learn from and build on, so out of purely selfish personal reasons, I'm excited.

Let's get the ball rolling in the traditional way, which is the question I like to ask of every Master Hypnotist is the early days.

- **How did you get into hypnosis in the first place?**
- **What was the draw and the first few steps you took into this fascinating world?**

**John:** I guess it all started, as a teenager I was really interested in yoga, into meditation and matters of higher consciousness, so I always had an interest in that. I started meditating around that time.

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Then, when I went to college I was a psych major and that was all my original training, so I always had an interest in the mind. I would say in academia we didn't really talk too much about hypnosis, at least in my schooling.

I had more traditional forms of therapy I guess you would say at the time, but then what happened was following school, working in the trenches, I guess you would say, in mental health clinics and stuff I was scrapping around to try and find whatever training I could get.

It just so happened at the time that the easiest training for me to get that I could get my agency to pay for was in family therapy and somewhat Gestalt Therapy also. I continued down that vein and I went to the Family Institute of Philadelphia, back about 1980 or 1981, when I got this textbook, which was an overview of family therapy.

There were these case studies of these different ways of working as families, and there was this one particular name that kept showing up consistently in the book, this guy named Milton Erickson.

**Igor:** Oh, no one's ever heard of him, have they?

**John:** Exactly. The thing was this was a pretty straight program I guess you would say. Some of the things that I would read that Erickson was doing then, the one that really caught my eye was a couple who had not consummated their marriage— this apparently was back in probably the 40s or 50s— for a certain amount of time.

They went to see Erickson and he discovered that they were both bed wetters. So what he had them do was this ritual of having to wet the bed at night together before they would go to sleep and magically this transformed into therapeutic success.

All the other stories had this sort of crazy twist to them with almost seemingly magical results. It stuck in my mind and I thought well, he sounds pretty interesting and then when I got more training and family therapy, particularly around giving families directives, one of the things that we would say is how did you know to make this particular directive to this family in this way?

They would say you have to understand presuppositions and if you really want to understand linguistic presuppositions, then you need to study Milton Erickson; so his then name came up again. Meanwhile, I'm getting mailings from different people and I guess my first official training was by a guy named Amnon Nadoff.

I think I was in private practice by then and I was doing okay, but it was very much the kind of situation where people were coming in I wondered at times

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whether or not, if I would be seeing somebody like myself back then, that I would have continued to see me.

It seemed like I was doing them some good, but I was doing a lot of talk therapy, some behavior therapy, and it was sort of a mish-mash of a bunch that I learned in school and some of the training and I couldn't always work with families.

**Igor:** Just to emphasize that point, I think particularly those who are more interested in the therapeutic stream, there are a lot of people who get attracted to hypnosis because they're thinking what am I doing or what good am I doing? Even just to kind of step outside for that for a second.

Something I think most hypnotists even go through, I went through myself for a while, is the idea of thinking what am I doing am I just telling people things they want to hear? Getting past that point is going to be a very important part of someone's journey, isn't it?

**John:** It really is. You really have to hang in there. I think that one of the things that's really important early on ... it was just my education. My education, when we were trained to be therapists, the orientation was called 'eclectic'. Eclectic to me means you know a little bit about a lot of things, but nothing thoroughly.

**Igor:** Jack of all trades, right.

**John:** Yes. So, I would get to certain points with people and I'd think well maybe I'm doing some good here, but then I really didn't have the depth of knowledge at that time to really go well, what do I do now that I got them to this place?

I think you're right. Part of what happens is if you stay in this long enough, whether it's coaching, therapy, consulting or anything, what you start to find usually pretty quickly is where are the holes and what are the limits to what you know?

That's actually a good place to get to because then you can start to focus a little bit more on where you – okay, this is the training I need then, or maybe I need to learn something about this specific type of client because now I'm getting a lot of people let's say that want to stop smoking, so how do I handle that?

That was the other thing that happened for me, I had been in it for I guess about four years and I was definitely running into plots of places where I saw the limits of what I was capable of doing.

**Igor:** So, then you had these four years setup phase where you did your traditional therapy approaches and you tried different things out.

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- **Then you actually had your first taste of, was it hypnosis, NLP or something else?**

**John:** It was actually Ericksonian hypnosis. In my first job working at a hospital as a mental health and drug and alcohol therapist, I had found out about this thing called the *Structure of Magic* and actually even bought the book, read the book, and frankly was completely mystified, but I read both of them.

**Igor:** Just to pause a little bit for those people who are not familiar with NLP, the *Structure of Magic* was the books published about NLP before NLP became NLP.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** It's like the real background thinking to NLP and it's a very tense, complicated looking book for what is essentially a very straightforward set of questions you ask people, right.

**John:** I would totally agree. I think it would make a great cure for insomnia for the uninitiated, if you read it late at night. But, the thing that for me that I got from that book was I could tell that there was a structure when they had some of the transcripts in that.

Again, I was fascinated but when I went back to the hospital and tried to do this line of questioning that seemed to be indicated in the book, basically the clients were chewing me up and spitting me out. It just seemed so out of context, so I pretty much abandoned that and forgot all about it.

Then what happened was when I took the first Ericksonian training, and that was really again and outgrowth of the family therapy background, I thought okay, now here's my chance.

This guy really seemed very credible. He trained only therapists at the time and he was this mystical sort of Israeli fellow. He has since passed on. I think he had a background in stage hypnotism and also, I think he was a Master Level psychotherapist in New York City, but that was a remarkable experience; that's all I would say.

It was in a hotel ballroom in Philadelphia, and I'll never forget, it was probably about the third night of the training where he did the standard induction that many of us do, you probably do them from time to time. It's the end of the time, you have a little time so you do an induction with the group and I don't think there was anything more to it than that as I recall.

I don't recall exactly what he was saying, but I remember having, at the time, this completely out of left field, overwhelming physical sensation and

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intellectual, spiritual awareness of love that I had just never; it was just like my whole system just filled up and practically exploded with this feeling.

Just imagine, you're in a hotel room with about maybe 30 other people. It seems to be this particular thing; it was very technical. It was not particularly a funny; there wasn't a lot of humor. The presentation wasn't all that spectacular but it was very interesting, very academic and very clinical and then I had this massive experience at the end of the day.

**Igor:** That, if nothing else would get you to really love hypnosis, right.

**John:** That's what happened. I thought my God this is the power of the unconscious mind, right here. It wasn't on my mind. There was nothing that had happened earlier in the day that had me going down that train of thought. It was just completely out of the ordinary for me to have that kind of experience in a context like that.

So, I got home from the training – I think that was a five-day training altogether – and I was a changed person when I got done with that. I was completely, no pun intended, transformed in a sense that when I went back to my practice I was not seeing or experiencing my clients in the way that I had before.

All of a sudden I started thinking to myself, the people you have in front of you really are so much more resourceful and much more than they think they are. I started seeing people as being far more capable. So my perception changed of them and it changed significantly for me, but there was only one problem; I still didn't know what to do.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** It was a total transformation sort of from the inside out, but when it came down to where the rubber meets the road, what do I say to this person to create this experience and so forth, I still wasn't sure what I was "supposed to be doing" then.

**Igor:** This is a very important point. There are two things you just said which I think I'd like to emphasize for people listening.

1. Number one, you discovered in a very pleasant firsthand sort of way the power of going first, the idea that as a hypnotist you want to go to those places that you want to lead your clients towards because then you know; you have conviction.

You have something inside you waking up whenever you talk about it or do something, which draws people in much more clearly than if you're standing on the rocks somewhere pointing in the distance going out yonder somewhere, that's where you want to be going, right.

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**John:** Right. Good luck!

**Igor:** Exactly. It's not that that approach won't work. I do know some hypnotists who don't actually "go into trance" themselves and will tell people where to go and what to do and they're very successful with it.

2. However, I honestly think that by going there first and having the experience yourself, you're making your life so much easier because you no longer have to try and figure out where to take people.

You just go there and go oh by the way, just to the left here, turn right here and oh, I know where you are, I got stuck there a few times myself. Just turn around and go this way because it's so much easier than the places you think you're going, right.

**John:** I totally agree. I think that of the people that I've met over the years I would say the people that really have and this is a little more on a therapeutic vein here, but the people who I have seen that had the most powerful results really learned what they learned ultimately from the inside out.

They might have gotten into it because they were interested in the techniques or something in the beginning to work with other people, but generally speaking it's that spirit of exploration, of curiosity, of truly wanting to find out how far can I take this or who am I really, I guess you'd say if you want to get into the more of the existential or spiritual realm of it.

That for me energetically has a huge effect when you're working with people because that's the energy or that's that spirit and the frame that you're coming from.

As you've probably heard me say before, if I'm unwilling at times to not be on the edge of map and to not be willing to go to those places, how can I expect clients that are coming in to see me do the same?

**Igor:** Absolutely.

**John:** That's a bias, and I agree with you, there are out there that can do very well, but it becomes the dichotomy that hopefully, if people stick with things long enough they eventually collapse, integrate and reach a higher synthesis. That is on one hand you have the person who is the technician, who learns the techniques, learn the procedures, know the content and they can actually be quite good.

**Igor:** Absolutely. It's also a very valuable phase to go through as you've found out for yourself.

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**John:** You've got to learn your chops.

**Igor:** For sure.

**John:** You've got to have something to start with there. It gives you frames of reference and particularly in the beginning, if you have a process to follow frankly you're less likely to get involved with a lot of irrelevant content and things that people might say that are part of their limitations because you're really thinking more about okay, I'm to the next step here.

So you've got that, but then the other end of that dichotomy is what I would call more the artist, I guess you would say, or the person who is just riding so much on their conviction; I guess I wouldn't even call them the artist I call them almost like the true believer. They've had this experience and it's worked for me so I know it can work for you.

They might be really rough around the edges, but very often those people have a certain kind of dynamic effect on other people that people will go along with them. Then, to say it more clearly, the higher synthesis is more the artistry, which is where you have that whole side that's experiential, the conviction that you've learned it from the inside out and then you've got the technician, and you bring those things together.

I think that's the highest form then. It's a lot like jazz and music where you learn to, most jazz musicians are classically trained, many of them, but that just cultures their nervous system. Then what happens is over time when they play, that's called jamming and that's all improvisation. That's based on what's happening in the moment and I think that's sort of the higher level that all of us are capable of achieving if we stay in it long enough.

**Igor:** It reminds me of a current analogy that I like to use with my students, which is the mechanics, engineers and musicians.

Most people come in trying to be mechanic. They see a cool set of skills or steps, particularly the more NLP-oriented people. Step one do this, step two say this, step three do that. That works great provided that the situation you're faced with fits exactly what the box was designed to do. You push the buttons in order and magic works.

If it doesn't work, the problem the mechanic has is he's stuck. He has no idea what makes the magic work he's just pushing the buttons. So, if he's not working, it's got to be the tool, the technique that's wrong, and so that's it. You can't do much more with it.

Now, an engineer goes the next step forward. In other words, he's looked at enough boxes, broken them up, gone to the edges and literally broken some of

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the boxes that have stopped working, to the point where he knows what the principles are behind all those things that he's doing. Now he's working more on a level of principles which gives him the freedom to make up stuff as he goes along.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** I think the final stage, which is when you talk about the artistry stage, I would call the "magician" stage, is a bit where you consciously let go of all the stuff.

You don't think about the principles anymore. You don't think about the techniques anymore. The only thing you're thinking about is really the outcome.

- ✓ Where is it that you know?
- ✓ What do you recognize?
- ✓ Where is it going to end up in?

That's like your hypnotic intention, your desire to get somewhere, and all the principles that you've spent years polishing and refining, all the techniques, techniques are important. All the hundreds of techniques that you've spent years polishing, refining, and tweaking around, those are still inside you somewhere and bits and pieces of them start recombining into new things.

You don't even realize it; it just comes out and you go whoa, where did that come from that's pretty good, I should write that down sometime.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** That's where the magic happens because you're letting your unconscious, which has this vast realm of possibilities, choose for you, so all you do is you pay attention to the moment and what is the next step that you have the take, right.

**John:** It really is. It's showing up and being completely present, knowing that you've been doing all of this practice sometimes in a very conscious, deliberate way, and as you said, you've taken things apart. You've taken a look at where you've gotten stuck and you've considered other ways of being.

But when you show up to actually do the work, your road map basically is where's the client right now, what's their present state and where do they want to go? At that point, then you are doing true Ericksonian hypnotherapy in the sense that you're casting something out there, you're finding out what their reaction is back, and that's how you know what your next step is going to be.



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To me, Milton Erickson never did Ericksonian hypnotherapy. What Milton Erickson did was he showed up to the game completely present. He had a massive background of information that the average therapist, psychiatrist, medical doctor or person for that matter, didn't have because he had a lot of rather unique opportunities in his life.

Therefore, he was able to work with people in ways that were individual, unique and different for each person and consequently he got great results.

I think all of us have that same native ability if we're willing to let the multitude of our life experiences run through those techniques, that's where all new techniques get developed and that's where you develop a certain amount of power, because it's the NLP techniques, Ericksonian hypnosis techniques or other classic hypnosis techniques.

They are run through your filters and to me; that's where the ultimate power is, is letting go and being able to make them your own.

**Igor:** You have to bring yourself into it because no one is going to do hypnosis like you do, no one is going to do hypnosis like I do, they have to do it their own way. It's something that took me a while to figure out.

We're kind of jumping ahead a little bit ahead on the journey, but when I first got into hypnosis and I think you were probably the first hypnotist I would call of a Master Hypnotist quality that I saw and I was blown away.

Of course, for years I went down not necessarily a trap, but I made a slight mistake though it's useful to go through for a period of trying to do everything the way that you did it until some years down the road I suddenly realized hang on a second, I'll never do it like John, because I'm not John!

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** Then there's things I'll do that you'll never do the way I do because you're not me.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** That's a really big realization to make. I think it's an important thing. I like your phrase 'you've got to work your chops'. You have to go through a phase where you emulate different people and you try things, which aren't necessarily congruent with your character, your personality or the way you do things just to expand your range of experiences.

Ultimately, that's not where you end up that's just a training phase you go through to stretch yourself as a person and you let go of that, then the new

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shape that you're in, that takes over and that's where you really start the path to mastery.

**John:** Yes, well said, I agree.

**Igor:** Now, one more thing that you had mentioned a minute ago, just to get back to it, is something again, which is another mistake some people make along the lines is a bit of a split in philosophy we have in hypnosis circles.

- I. On the one side you have the very technique-oriented trainers saying oh, this is the ultimate killer technique – you follow these 10 steps and you always get it every time.

They've got a whole bunch of them and there's a lot of value there. But they're preaching for the conscious mind and that's where the conscious mind gets really excited by.

We have the other side.

- II. We know a number of people who do this who say conscious minds are useless, they're in the way, they slow people down, so all we have to do is install this stuff at the unconscious level, you'll know it all, but you won't even know you know it, so you'll just do stuff magically.

It appears that your very first training really gave you a taste of that second field. You had an epiphany. You had wonderful experiences.

- **You were riding on cloud nine, then as soon as your feet touched the Earth you went what the hell do I do now, which is a classic problem, isn't it?**

**John:** It is. One of the things that was so funny, I'll never forget it. I did very much a number of times with client's right after that training I did do some things that had a profound effect. I couldn't even tell you what they were. Even now with what I know reflecting back, I have no earthly idea what I said or did but it seemed to have a great impact and that's when it worked really well.

Other times, I'm thinking one time it was a little less let's say gratifying, was I was working with a schizophrenic client and he was fairly functional. He was a sculptor actually, but very withdrawn and didn't talk much. I don't even remember how we got into this but I actually said to him let's look at the second hand on this clock. I want to show you what your mind is capable of doing.

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Let's see if we can slow it down. The words were nary out of my mouth, Igor, when I thought Overdurf, what the hell are you doing? I was just like ... first of all, how is this relevant, and number two, what are you really thinking here?

I know what happened was is I dipped into that sense of anything's possible, and when you have that feeling that anything is possible, the one thing, as long as you set up the context so it's relatively safe, is in most cases you will discover things that are beyond what you thought you could do.

Sometimes they aren't always going to be the ones that you feel good about afterwards, but you still learned something from that.

For me, that was the real takeaway, even from that experience with my client there, it was like well okay, you've really just started to blow out some of the boundaries in terms of your own thinking and at the same time, even some of the ways I thought I had to be as a psychotherapist back then.

Then, in that way, anything like that when you're in that state that anything is possible really can get you to the next step.

**Igor:** That's an important realization, but coming back to the idea of unconscious learning, you had an experience of doing stuff backwards, it was great when it worked, but one of the important reasons why anything involving the conscious mind is that what happens when you're sitting there and the magic is not flowing.

- **How do you get that stream flowing again when you're sitting there thinking all right, I've got a client here I have no idea what I'm doing but I'm trusting my unconscious mind to do something?**

Nothing's happening. Do something! Quick! Then the pressure starts mounting, people start losing their confidence and they don't know what is going on. They're great when they are in the flow of life, but how do they get into that when they haven't got anything that's sort of being fired up?

That's probably where the idea of techniques, conscious knowledge and some strategies are useful because they're going to cover the ground between not having a clue what to do and not having a clue why you're doing what you're doing, because those are two very different experiences, right.

**John:** Yes, and as you're saying it's really the marriage of both. There are two ways to think about it.

1. Number one, in terms of what's the purpose of the conscious mind, if you will or of our awareness?

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One of them, we could say there's many, but one is to model the excellence of our unconscious mind; one of the things which is really how NLP was born in some ways.

The idea is that if you can take that flashlight or that spotlight and shine it back into the dark where some of these great ideas came from or you come up with something profound that you do with a client, if you have no conscious awareness you're not in a position of necessarily being replicate it or even polish it to get it even better.

Therefore, that's how most of the techniques will get developed over time, so I agree. In the beginning techniques got me through a lot of situations because I realize if I just stick to the numbers, if I'm truly stuck I'll probably be better off.

Those are the things, by the way, that you really can do outside of a session that you had with a client or if you're working with a group, that's the kind of stuff that you can practice consciously. In the whole area now neuroscience, called 'neuroplasticity', which is the whole idea that different parts of the brain can take over for different parts and our ability to understand how our brain works.

These are called top-down practices. That is where you're willfully, consciously doing certain things to create new associations, new abilities and so forth, that you want to have show up at certain times in your life.

Then there's the other side, which is called 'bottom up' that's more of the so-called unconscious change where you go wow, how did I get here? Something happened that's significant, but I really don't have a clue. It's a matter of learning to use both with your own personal growth and, when you're working with clients.

**Igor:** Right. Just to give you an analogy again on those top-down, bottom-up things, because I think there are very significant ways of viewing how the brain can go through change it's not either/or it's actually both/and.

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** The one is like you need a river to go down to a particular village say, and through hard effort, through sweat, toil and time you can dig a long trench that goes from a well somewhere or from a lake, through your town and you have a nice what's called a 'canal', which you've created for the water to run through. It takes a lot of effort. It takes a lot of time, but you can do it.

The opposite side is the one where you watched that when it rains, the rain likes to fall down a particular path in the mountain and each time it rains it will do more and more of it, so that this little groove cuts in, that groove becomes

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deeper, it becomes a channel, the channel becomes a stream and the stream ends up becoming a river over time.

That one feels more effortless because all we have to do is wait for the rain to show up and it happens on its own. But also, some people find it more difficult to do that on purpose because you have to wait for the rain to show up on its own, right.

**John:** Exactly. It's really both and very often what we can do consciously is we can create the context for us to be surprised and delighted by our unconscious, which is to me, maybe later on if we talk a little bit about self-hypnosis to me, that's the whole trick to having self-hypnosis being effective.

If most people while they are in so-called trance by themselves, they're giving themselves so many conscious directives while they're supposed to be in trance that the reason for being in trance has now been completely undermined, because the idea there is to bypass your linear functioning so something more non-linear, spontaneous, more holistic and holographic can take place.

**Igor:** It's the classic dilemma or the classic paradox of trying to be consciously unconscious.

**John:** Yes. It's a division of labor in that situation where you use your conscious mind to make the request before you go into trance. You make the request.

You don't try to dictate to the unconscious mind how to do it because frankly it's probably going to have everything that you're not thinking about at that moment, which we could call your unconscious, is probably going to contain a lot more creative ideas than what you happen to think consciously just before you're "going into trance."

The idea there is to say that so that you can let go, and when you go into trance then enjoy more of the sensations associated with it and set up some sort of suggestion that you'll open your eyes if you're using an eye closure, once your unconscious mind has completed the work and that's that.

**Igor:** The flipside of that is learning to trust that that process is actually working rather than you sitting there with your eyes closed going is it working; is it working yet?

**John:** Yes, exactly. Trust is an interesting word because most people say I'll trust it if I have the evidence.

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If you have the evidence that's not called trust anymore, that's called having the evidence which is more around conviction and some sort of empirical proof that you've got; therefore, in the beginning you may not have all of that.

Then it's more a matter of are you willing to suspend your belief and thinking long enough to start to have some of those experiences so that the trust that is very frail in the beginning let's say or a little wobbly starts to deepen into something that's a much stronger conviction or knowing.

**Igor:** Right. So, coming back to where we started from which is that you were kind of lucky in the sense that you met Amnon earlier on in your hypnotic career, and he very much gave you an experience, that five-day training was very much that big ah-ha moment experience of trusting and of knowing how to switch your mind into that mode.

That actually has been something which I think would be fair to say helped your whole career as a hypnotist over the last 20 or 30 odd years that you've been doing this work.

Then there's a flip side as well, the top-down stuff.

- **Where did you learn the more formalized process that more chops that you have to get down, the mechanical elements?**

**John:** Well, what happened then was not too long went by, maybe about nine months or so, and I took a training with a guy named Ron Klein at the time in Silver Springs, Maryland. He was one of the early people that ... he went to all the early Baylor and Grinder trainings.

So, while Ron had more of a classic background in hypnosis and was more of an Ericksonian, he started using NLP as a way to explain why and how certain things worked. So, for the first time now I was actually learning structures of this is how you work with a conflict, this is how you work if a person has a phobia.

For example, if it's more generic, these are the steps for how to induce trance, even.

Obviously, I had some pretty magical experiences in those trainings also, but the difference was there was much more of a balance I would say between unconscious processing, experiences and at the same time, conscious structure so that I had something to rely on when I would go back and work with my clients.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

I had something there that I could go okay, these are the steps and I'm going to continue to do these steps until I started to get some of these results, which is where I really "got my chops".

I trained with him for roughly four years. I was in a supervision group with him for about the same amount of time actually, where I was about every other week in the beginning would go down to Washington – I was in Pennsylvania at the time – for three hours doing supervised therapy.

We'd either have people come in from the outside that knew nothing about NLP or hypnosis and we would have a certain amount of time to work with them or one of us in the group would present an issue and then one of us would be the therapist and then he would supervise it and coach whoever the therapist was.

**Igor:** That's such a very valuable practice, especially when you're starting with these processes to actually get hands-on guidance on how to use it, get instant feedback, where if you get stuck you can do a time-out and someone says try these things or just try that thing.

It's a very useful way of actually understanding the nuances of what you're doing versus getting the big picture, which is what a training seminar can do. You have that dual thing, the supervision element which is you're doing it and you're getting feedback and you're in a community of peers of people who are just as dedicated as you are to succeeding.

On the flip side, you have the actual skills and techniques that you've already ingrained but now you're beginning to understand on a slightly fresher, newer light because they're hitting reality, starting to fall to pieces and you have to gather the pieces back together again and say all right, we have to adjust them now to fit the situation.

**John:** I totally agree. I think without a doubt, training can give you the basic, as you said, the big picture. It can even give you the basic patterns, but most of the time what you have is the opportunity to run those patterns just a few times and you may or may not have completely connected them to actual experiences that you're going to encounter "in the real world".

I think once you get out there you find out that is one of the roads I would say to mastery, because that's where you start to realize, wow, there's a pattern here. There's a certain type of issue that comes up or when a person looks at me or says something in a certain way, I'm starting to notice I'm not sure how to react.

Situations like that, the training isn't really designed to do. For me and for people that want to get out ... they go to a training, to get out there and dig in right away, but for me, the only ethical way to do it is to be in supervision.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

Otherwise, you could be waiting for years thinking that you have to get more and more training before you actually go out and you actually work with somebody, which is the very thing that you need. You need to work for somebody, because that's where you're really going to integrate the training.

On the other hand, if you're doing that, you're not exactly smooth or sure of what you know and what you don't know, things like that that's where having a supervisor or having a group that you can go to makes a difference, because then you're in that immediate place where you want to know how do I handle this situation and the situation won't get too far out of control.

At the same time, you're learning at a much earlier level the kinds of things that many people wait for years before they think they're "good enough" to start using.

**Igor:** I think supervision is a great thing to help people get past that trap of being a seminar junkie where all I need is just one more seminar and I'll be good enough, and get them actually doing stuff.

Your mind is going to be in that mindset of I know I'm going to be faced with a real person, with a real problem and I'm actually going to have to do something about it. Now, all the other information they get, whether it's listening to training tapes or reading a book or whatever it is, is focused on one specific problem.

This person is going to come in and I'm going to have to deal with whatever it is that they are presenting. Your mind starts looking for information rather than just saying things and going oh, that looks interesting so it actually puts it somewhere so it becomes of value, right.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** So, while I think supervision is a great thing and I recommend everyone do it; those people who don't have the capacity to go to one, they can still do it on their own because there's a lot of people like myself, for example, who make their own way it's not easy.

I remember my very first client I ever saw, I think I was more terrified of him than he was of me.

By actually putting yourself in that position, whether it's the gentler supervision stream where someone gets to guide it on the way or you do it on your own and you just choose something that you know you can swallow, you can actually deal with the context.



## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

The point is, you're out there doing stuff now and you're doing it from start to finish rather than just going to a seminar and doing an exercise after an exercise, after an exercise.

**John:** Yes. The other thing that's underneath what you're saying there that I think is unique about you, Igor too, is that somewhere along the line whether you're getting supervised or not, you have to have at least some sense of confidence that everything is going to turn out okay, somehow.

Having that resourcefulness and I know for me, my first job I was fresh out of college and had to evaluate whether people were completely psychotic, whether they were toxic maybe from drugs and alcohol or if there was some sort of organic brain problem or something.

I was not trained for any of that stuff, so I was completely thrown into the deep end over my head practically every day I went to work. I was encountering things that were just so off the map relative to what I had learned in school, so part of what happened for me also was I just figured well, it's going to work out okay, I don't want to keep making the same mistake over and over again, but I have to put myself out there, I've got to jump and find out what happens.

That's just a key element that if they don't have that ability and they're really interested in hypnosis but they're just not there yet.

To me, the first order of business then is to get with somebody who they know well, have that person do a piece of work with them so that they are confident enough that they can jump into a situation and realize that the client's probably had the issue for a long time, so if they don't get it in the first session or something like that, all is not lost.

That's what one of my first family therapy teachers used to say. He'd say if you don't get the change in the first session, that's what the second session is for, that's why you always schedule a second session.

**Igor:** It takes a lot of pressure off you, right.

**John:** Yes, exactly.

## Interview – Part 2

**Igor:** I think you said something very important which again, I'd like to emphasize for everyone, which is the idea of it is jumping in. The analogy I have in my mind is something I did when I was a teenager.

I was off on one of these holiday summer camp things. It was water sports. One of them, I remember we were canoeing down a river and one of the instructors, once we were on a little island, pulls us off to one side, we had a dozen boys and says okay, come up here I want to show you something.

We climb up to this big rock, he stands at the end of this rock and says okay, in a moment I'm going to get you guys to volunteer and you're going to basically run as fast as you can. When you get to the end of the rock, don't look, don't think just jump as far as you can.

Essentially, there was like a little whirlpool right underneath the rock in the river just going past on the other side, so you had to jump enough to avoid the whirlpool and get into the river, but you had flotation devices and so on.

I think that's what it felt like to me when I saw my very first hypnosis client. I had very little confidence in terms of my skill, believe it or not. I thought I could ask questions. I knew I could ask great questions partly because I was a lawyer and took to the idea of the meta model because of this.

I knew I was good with the language the Milton model and could just fudge the edges of things a little bit. Believe it or not, that is all I started with. I did not think that most techniques I could unpick in my mind and most of the other things I thought, I'm not sure that will work.

What I had to do was do exactly what I did then, which was just run and when I had enough momentum, just keep the momentum going which I got from a seminar. My first client was booked in two days after my last seminar.

I just ran, jumped and I was scared witless going down because I saw that big whirlpool and I felt like let's see if I can just swim through there a little bit to get further away from it and sure enough, I landed in the edge of the whirlpool so I had to work like a real manic person swimming my way out of it, but that's part of where you grow and learn from.

You go in and you expect it to not necessarily work out perfectly, but all you're looking for is what is experience and what is it that happened? As long as you're willing to jump in over and over again, your mind suddenly twigs and goes okay, I know the things to avoid.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

If you jump a little bit more to the left it gets a hell of a lot easier than going more to the right because the right is where the problem starts, so you're more likely to get sucked in. If you're more to the left you cheat a little because you're in safer, calmer waters, and you still get to the place you want to go.

**John:** Yes. Obviously, there's the point about having somebody there who is a guide that at least set up the context so that you carry it.

**Igor:** That helps a lot.

**John:** I agree. Your metaphor reminds me much of one of the studies where NLP was found to be pretty useful was the so-called U.S. Army study; the pistol shooting study.

I was good friends with one of the main modelers for that. One of the things that they discovered with master shooters was that they didn't do ready, aim, fire. The sequence they would go through was ready, fire, aim, fire. So they realized if they didn't commit, they would never know what adjustments they had to make.

Eventually, if they were willing to commit enough, fire first and then aim in a more thoughtful way, when it came time for competition, they had developed such a more sophisticated sense of making adjustments and even getting the first shot right because they had finer distinctions because they were always willing to commit; they were willing to shoot.

**Igor:** That's it. If there's going to be one secret that I would want to share with people for getting greater hypnosis, I like that phrase you came up with **ready, fire, aim, fire**.

That's pretty much it which is, you go there, you do inductions not to get the results, you do them to see what happens, and then you do them again to see if you can fix whatever you didn't like about it or if the result wasn't quite what you were hoping for. You do a second one afterwards to see if you can counteract some of the things that came up that you weren't expecting or didn't necessarily want.

For example, if someone opens their eyes halfway through the induction, then you do another induction right afterward say close your eyes and keep them closed, that's how you learn. It's not to expect that the very first thing you ever do is going to be picture perfect.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** I think that's an important point and I want to thank you for bringing that up.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

This leads us to another idea which is, you've gone through many, shall we say trials, some mistakes, some successes and so on, which led you to be where you are now and become truly gifted as a hypnotist.

I've seen a lot of people and I honestly do mean this, your command of hypnotic language, of hypnotic skills is so far in excess of most people I've seen, people just have to; if you get a chance to train with John, I strongly recommend it. You will be blown away with how much fun and how good it really is.

- **Could you share with us some of your own stories, some of your early days, successes, some failures, some of the stuff where you drew important lesson's from?**

**John:** There are a lot of them. I guess the one that is strictly related to hypnosis that is sort of a fun one. Many years ago, and I had probably only been doing hypnosis at that time for maybe three or four years, I'm not sure.

A woman came for a session and her initial presenting issue was that she had some truly difficult sensations and pain that were secondary to having multiple sclerosis.

She came in and said look, I know you do hypnosis and things like this and you help people heal and so forth. I'm not asking you to really heal me in terms of the actual disease; I'm just having a lot of problems right now with dealing with everyday life because of the pain.

For folks that don't know about MS, one of the main characteristics is it's an inflammation of the sheath around nerves, the myelin sheath. One of the things that happens is people can get unpredictable kinds of shocks and confusion between what's hot and cold along with what most people would call pain.

She was having a lot of this, so I decided to go with hypnosis because for me, a straight order for hypnosis is whenever you're dealing with something that obviously can occur below the level of language and level of conscious thought in a consistent way; pain is a good example of that.

I worked with her in trance a lot and utilized catalepsy with arm levitation as often a part of whatever it was that I was doing.

A good bit of what I did was talk to her about the redundancy of the nervous system while she was in trance. I would say things like, for example, if you were to make a phone call right now from Lancaster, Pennsylvania to Los Angeles, there could be some major city that would be out and you might never know because why? Because what happens is the call can get re-routed to other places and still end up where you want it to end up.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

I would just use lots and lots of metaphors like that, basically around neuroplasticity and the flexibility of our nervous system. When I anchored the pain and the attacks, as she called them, to these suggestions. In other words, in trance I said to her whenever you start to feel the pain, what's going to happen is you will go into a healing trance.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** In a healing trance, you will begin to refresh everything that you've heard inside of trance, whereas outside of trance. You may not ever remember what has happened, only that you're feeling so much better; something like that.

I continued doing that with her over a number of sessions. You know what, all the symptoms that she had come in for basically abated so well that the physicians that were treating her essentially said your disease, so to speak has gone into remission.

I hadn't heard from her in a while, but many years later I got a phone call from her. She had moved in with a fellow who she ended up marrying and they adopted a child. Early on in their relationship he noticed – and this was why she was calling – she said, I think you need to talk to my boyfriend because he's really concerned that something's not right.

I said; what is it? She said what's happening is when I'm going to bed at night he's seeing something that is freaking him out. I said; what is it? She said I'm going to give the phone to my boyfriend.

He says to me, I'm asleep and sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and I notice that her arm is up in the air like it's paralyzed, straight up in the air, and she's sound asleep.

**Igor:** That's quite a trippy thing for someone to see that has no idea of hypnosis, right.

**John:** Yes. He didn't know what to make of it. He said she told me that it had something to do with hypnosis that you had done with her, but I wasn't sure because I don't really know anything about it. I said well now you're actually learning about how powerful hypnosis really is.

**Igor:** And now as the second trance begins...

**John:** Exactly. That was sort of a cool one early on.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

This was like years later, to know just how powerfully persistent her unconscious mind was, in following through with suggestions that it knew were still relevant for her and all that happened now was, instead of having the healing trance maybe during the day which is what used to happen, her unconscious mind was taking advantage of sleep to do it, so that during her waking hours she wouldn't really have to be doing that anymore.

**Igor:** Which once again shows the power of the unconscious to be creative and make things fit your life rather than trying to make you fit into whatever is happening around you.

**John:** Yes. The thing that always blows me away Igor, is that sometimes I work with people and what happens is, their unconscious mind comes up with this solution.

So, I'll often say to them we could have sat around here for hours, days, weeks, maybe even months trying to come up with a solution and we could have never come up with as elegant and many times as intricate and many times as simple as what your unconscious mind came up with in the matter of sometimes just a second or a couple of seconds, something like that.

You do value's elicitation with somebody, clear some things at the unconscious level and you re-elicite their values and all of a sudden the values; there's no negative emotions associated with them, they're lined up, the person feels aligned so there are no conflicts anymore.

You say my God, if we had to take a list of 10 words and get them to fit together that well, it would take a long time to probably do that in a conscious, deliberate way.

**Igor:** Right. This is one of the beauties of doing the work that we do, which is as soon as you start working with the unconscious, particularly more in-depth stuff.

Therefore, it's a constant reminder of just how powerful and how useful this stuff is to the point where – I don't know if it's happened to you – but sometimes when I work with a client and I had a real powerful impact in their life they leave the door, I'm smiling going damn, I wished I'd been him because whatever he's on, I'd like to have some of that as well!

**John:** Yes, I've had that one a few times too. That is the optimal therapeutic relationship right there.

**Igor:** Right, because then you've really done the work well. I get inspired by that. Sometimes when you do it that well you happen to luck out because the client is in the right place at the right time and you just have to be tipping them over the edge. It's a real joy to watch that happen. It's a very powerful motivator.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

All I can say is, for anyone who hasn't started using hypnosis yet but is thinking about going into it as a field, start working with a few people just on minor issues if nothing else, because all it takes is one person to respond this powerfully to you, the suggestions and the work that you're doing, and then you'll be sold.

You'll know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this stuff is powerful and useful, and that's easy through all the other times when you make mistakes, you go back to your cave to lick your wounds after you've just tried something ambitious and it's gone horribly wrong and so on.

We've all been through that, haven't we? Having something in the back of your mind that says no, but I know how this could be; that, at least for me, that's what keeps me going and says okay, I made a mistake here or I'm not quite sure what happened on this one but I want to work it out because I want every one of my clients eventually to get the point that person just did. I know it's possible because it just happened.

**John:** Yes, it really is about building her conviction and it goes back to what you said just a little earlier. The only way you're going to build a conviction is at some point, you have to jump in and that's when you start collecting those experiences.

**Igor:** Tell me a little bit about some of the experiences you've had which, shall we say you needed to make sure you had some other positive reference experiences to keep you going.

In other words, people will look at someone like you and say oh, it's okay for John, he's a Master Hypnotist, he can do all this stuff, he doesn't make mistakes and so on.

➤ **That's not really how you became to be a Master Hypnotist, is it?**

**John:** No, it really isn't. In fact, the whole idea of master anything wasn't really in my mind at the time. I just wanted to help my clients. I was one of those guys that while I had an interest in doing meditation, things like that, when I had the experience with them I went to Ron, I started to get the techniques and then I got very focused on wanting to help people. I wanted to help people.

I thought, you know, I could be doing even more. I started thinking you could be doing more of this stuff on yourself, really applying what you think you can only do with clients, being to apply it to yourself so that you start to deepen that.

One of these things that I found was really important was I thought you have to start using more and more of this with yourself. I had an opportunity that came up.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

I was an avid runner. I had a problem with my knee. I had to have a diagnostic procedure called an arthrogram, which is not full-out surgery but it's where they stick a fairly thick needle into the joint, blow in dye and air in order to take pictures of your knee while they twist it around in different positions, knowing of course that your knee is already sore since that's why you're going to see them.

So, I thought this would be a great place for you to use self-hypnosis. What you ought to do is use one of these inductions that you're learning and apply it in this situation. I did sort of the standard, what we used to call the old Betty Erickson approach to autohypnosis.

There are a couple different versions of this but the one that I knew was simply I would say to my unconscious mind hey, unconscious mind, I want you to create an experience so that I would not have to use any kind of local anesthetic and that the body interprets this whole thing as part of the healing and however you do that would be great.

Let me know when it's time to come back out of trance. Then I went into trance. This is my conscious mind, I thought yes, probably it's going to be all about getting relaxed, feeling comfortable and that kind of thing almost being spaced out when I'm in there and I don't remember it or something.

It was so weird Igor, because I kept getting one image and that was it. I wasn't even sure if I was in trance or not, but the image was a picture of me when I was about 12 years old on a Sunday getting ready to play a midget football game.

I was in my uniform. I'm holding my helmet. It's just an hour or so before the game, so I'm totally pumped and jazzed up, because I have my uniform on and I'm ready to go in there and do it. I thought that's really weird, because it was antithetical to what I consciously thought. It was completely the opposite state. It was much more excited and psyched up okay I'm going to go for it.

I go to the doctor's office, I walk in that day and they said your name is? I said my name is John Overdurf, like that and it was like where did that come from? They sort of looked at me like who's this guy? They said okay, we'll let you know when we're ready to take you back to the examination room. I'm sitting there and I'm just feeling more and more pumped up.

Finally, they say Mr. Overdurf, you can go back to room C or whatever they said, and I looked over at them and as I walked by I said let's rock and roll! There was about maybe five people in the waiting room and they're like okay, where did this guy get transported from?



## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

So, I go in there, I'm there, I'm talking to the person and lo and behold, the radiologist that was doing it was getting her degree in social work. We had this lovely conversation about the school she was going to, she knew that I had once worked at this hospital that she works at and we had this big long discussion.

Then, I noticed that they were shaking my knee around and stuff and I thought she was getting ready to shake my knee as they do sometimes to find a good place to stick the needle in.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** She does that, she says okay and I said oh okay, what do you mean? She says you're all done. I said what we're all done? She said yes. I said wow you are a really good doctor. She says no, you're a really good patient.

I walked out and when you're done with that particular procedure, when I was done with that particular procedure, my knee was still filled up with this sac of dye, water and air, so my knee was about two or three times the normal size, sloshing around.

You go up and down steps and you can hear the sloshing sound. I walked out of that place and right across the street at the time, a gym that I would go to. I drove across the street actually, got out of my car, went to the gym and did an upper body workout right after that.

I didn't do anything with my knee or my leg or anything like that, but there was virtually. I had no sensation whatsoever other than sort of feeling like sort of a bean bag in my knee sloshing around.

**Igor:** That must have been a powerful convincing again of knowing that you have an unconscious mind and that your unconscious mind is a hell of a lot smarter than you think it is. That it can give you solutions to things that are just so unexpected but it's not what you think you want, it's what you actually need.

**John:** Yes, that's well put. I would have never guessed that. That really helped me a lot working with clients because then I realized okay, there's this whole non-linear aspect to how the unconscious mind processes things. It processes things according to associations on that level rather than on linear logic the way that our conscious mind typically thinks.

Unconsciously, there's always these combinations of experiences that can be brought together to create a whole new way of being that typically would not be something that you're conscious mind probably would ever come up with on its own.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

**Igor:** This brings us to another idea going more towards your mindset as a hypnotist. One of the questions I'd like to ask people because I think it's fundamental to where the skill comes from is, for you.

- **How do you actually view hypnosis?**
- **What do you think it is?**
- **How is it do you conceive of that whole field, if you like, that has influenced the way to your work?**

**John:** For me, first of all, hypnosis is naturally occurring. It's something that all of us are capable of doing. We may not have used it in a therapeutic way or not, but it's an ability where if you're alive and breathing on this planet, you've gone in and out of trance millions of times over the course of your life.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** What we do as hypnotherapists or hypnotists, is teach a person how to utilize the special state that's a state to me, of a heightened attention that allows us to focus in or expand on certain parts of an experience that we've never considered in a certain way.

In some cases, it could mean focusing in on one small thing that we've always overlooked, or other times it could be expanding out possibilities that are way outside of the box that we've never considered before.

What we're really doing with hypnosis is learning how to voluntarily use the power of all of our involuntary processes, really is another way of considering that, one of which is all of the thinking that goes on behind the scenes.

What I usually say in training about clients or friends, I'll ask people, have you ever had a friend who called you up one day and said you know, I'm in the middle of this and I need a little bit a sounding board and a little advice, would you be willing to help me with this and you say yes, sure.

The person proceeds to tell you something and there's a point in the conversation where you think you know what, I've got something to offer you that I think you'll really like. It might be real helpful. So, you say to the person hey, why don't you do (X)? The person says oh that will never work. You say no, just consider it. They reply oh, I've already thought of that that would never work.

**Igor:** It's the classic thing, right.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

**John:** It's the classic thing where the reflexive conscious thinking is deflecting any possibility of real deep consideration of that before the words are barely out of your mouth.

So, what hypnosis does whether it's working with a client or working with ourselves is it allows us to pay attention to parts of our experience in a completely new way from a different point of view than we typically do. That's all the other things of course that come out of that, if you've developed that ability.

**Igor:** This kind of explains also one of the fundamental conflicts that we have between or what seems to be a conflict between classical hypnosis and more Ericksonian type hypnosis.

1. One is all about contracting, thinking about down to one tiny little idea, the James Brady idea of fixating attention.
2. On the other side, you've got this idea of expanding thinking beyond the limitations that are normally hold or constrain people's thinking, so you're going beyond into a much wider field.

But really, you're doing the same thing, you're taking people out of their routines of thinking so that they have access to things ideas and possibilities, but isn't in that routine it's everywhere else but that routine.

**John:** Exactly. For a person to have a problem you can say there is a band of reality. There is something, and it could be wider or narrower, it just depends but there's a certain band of reality that they're paying attention to in order for them to have a certain limitation or certain problem.

What hypnosis does, in my opinion, in a very natural kind of way is once the person is in the state, typically they will migrate to some other place other than that band of reality that they normally use to process whatever that issue is, which is where they start to find all the solutions.

**Igor:** Therefore, this goes right back to the fundamental belief as a hypnotist, which is people have all the resources they need at some level, whether it's the ability to acquire more information or just the ability to find something in an experience that they forgot about, like your little league getting pumped up to play football state.

Or, where it's in them already in terms of its something they can already use straight away or it's in them already in the sense that they know how to go out and acquire more of what they need. Either way, hypnosis allows us to get in touch with that rather than sitting down and wallowing about how the world is unfair, it's everyone else's fault and it's always something.

## Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

**John:** Exactly. I agree.

**Igor:** Moving forward, one of the things that I think; this really characterizes your work and this is something that you're already famous for, something that attracted me to your work in the first place, which is you have one of the most exquisite uses of advanced hypnotic language, of pretty much anyone I've come across.

I'm comparing you to some of the greats people know. People like Rich Spangler, Milton Erickson, and so on. I honestly think that your command of hypnotic language rivals and in many ways exceeds what we know of them as well.

- **Can you tell us a little but about how you evolved your attitude towards hypnotic language, where it came from, and what you think about hypnotic language that allows you to view it in the way that you do, which of course, allows you to get the results that you get?**

**John:** It's interesting because in my early training because I didn't have a formal practitioner right away – that happened about a year later actually from when I started hypnosis – nobody really taught me the Milton model patterns or the so-called hypnotic language patterns of Milton Erickson as modeled or taught in NLP.

I started to get a rough idea but I really didn't get the structure too much of what was going on, and it took a while until I got good enough teaching that people started showing me some of the structures.

Once they started getting again, again I was doing it more inside of a therapeutic model, and I just loved the idea that if you could have a conversation with somebody, have it appear to be less and less like a therapeutic encounter or where I'm "running a technique" and could make it more conversational over the years, that always attracted me.

Again, remember that I was still basically a therapist. The license that therapists have when they work with people is people are expecting techniques and things like that very often because they're going to see a therapist.

So for me, where the acid test came was starting to look at doing coaching, which is often considered to be in the corporate environment, it's very popular now, it's very accepted, but it's also very often a very conscious problem-solving process.

What I wanted to do was to do what I was doing called coaching, but to engage the same kind of unconscious processing that one would have if we were doing formal trance.

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For me, the whole idea was how conversational can you get so that you're getting the same kinds of therapeutic effects that you would get if you were doing an obvious therapeutic pattern, but you can do it by just having more of a conversation with somebody.

That was the key thing for me. That's always been the acid test and still is now. I always go from all right I have an idea. I think okay, this is a really cool pattern, it's a little clunky or shall we say esoteric and I'm going to do it that way enough times until I start to integrate whatever that pattern is.

Then, once I do that then it's going to be how can I start to streamline this over and over and over until it becomes something that I can just say and it might look like I'm having an animated conversation but it doesn't really look like I'm "doing" any therapy pattern.

**Igor:** Let me just pause here a second, because I think that's something very important what you just said, which is you actually take a, shall we say technique, and the first thing you'll do is you'll do it the way it's recommended, in other words, you'll do it by the numbers, by the book until you understand it.

Or, until you got the results where they you can say okay, I understand what the maneuvers do, why I'm doing them, and so on. Then, you will translate the technique into a more conversational, shall we say covert sort of thing, but that's only once your instincts are in place. In other words, once you understand the technique well enough, you'll be able to translate it.

What you don't do is see a pattern and say let's make this conversational straight away. That would be where a lot of people would go wrong because they will just throw things out there, which sound clunky and weird and totally out of context because they're trying to do it covertly straight away and then understand the nuances, which are two-fold.

- a. One is the technique and the things the technique needs.
- b. Two is the conversation and the things the conversation needs in order to remain conversational.

**John:** Yes, exactly.

**Igor:** Now, in order to do this, you've obviously in your mind evolved a model which allows us to be able to translate pretty much any technique into more conversation and so on.

What were some of the, shall we say intellectual influences or experiences are that you've had that allows you to go from on the one side the regular techniques that everyone knows because you just pick up a book and read it

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out, and then begins to give you ideas about okay, I could shift this towards that.

- **What kind of experiences did you have that allowed you to begin to translate in that way or think about it slightly differently?**

**John:** I think as probably many of the people that you teach, to me where a lot of the important things occur are often outside of the obvious field of study that you're in.

So, in other words, I was very interested in therapy, in hypnosis, NLP, all those kinds of things and linguistics, but the thing that would help me a lot was really learning about other systems of thought, other ideas. That was a key element for me. Music has played a big role in that idea.

What's happened then I think is it's learning to detect patterns in what you're doing and not try to know what the patterns are always in advance, let me clarify this what I mean is yes, I'll learn something new if I learn from somebody else, I'm going to do it straight by the book.

What I start to look for after I've integrated it is there some other pattern that's not the obvious one here that's actually more streamlined than the one I got taught.

That to me has to do with number one, being willing to be in the experience enough that you do it enough times that you'll start to catch yourself doing it. To me, that's the key element.

I have a pretty good working knowledge of the neurology, the physiology of the brain and linguistics, so usually what will start to happen and quantum mechanics has been a big role in that also.

What will happen is I'll start to see a pattern and I'll often equate it to something outside of the field just temporarily to get a different angle or a different take on it, and then usually after that I say okay, I don't need to do this or wow, this is just about manipulating time and space, so how can I just do that with the language instead of having to do this big, long, clunky pattern?

Then, typically what I would do over time Igor, even way back when I first started NLP I used to have imaginary clients and I would imagine that they would present an issue to me and I would type it out, at that time on my Apple or Mac 512k, client says I can't change or I don't know what to do.

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Then I would write back something like when did you change into that way of thinking, and I would start playing with the language literally almost a back and forth dialogue between the client and myself to start to eliminate patterns in a different representational system, i.e. visual.

**Igor:** Okay, right so you'd have a maneuver, a direction that you move people in.

In this case, people start off in one representational system and you're moving to another one, and you'd run these imaginary conversations where you would stepwise do that, and then they might counter something and then you'd have to present something else.

- **So, you run these imaginary threads through, which would give you much more, shall we say fine-tuned control of that particular aspect of language, right?**

**John:** Yes. Then the other huge piece, which you know that I'm a big fan of, is the whole idea of calibration and sensory acuity.

To me, the real difference between a Milton Erickson and the worst used car salesman that you would never even want to talk to for a minute or two, very often is not in the eloquence of their linguistic constructions or their ability to make suggestions.

It usually has to do with timing, rapport and is this really the right thing to say here at this time, staying present with the client, so you're only throwing something out there so that you realize okay, I'm making this suggestion and now what I'm going to notice is what is my client's reaction to this suggestion and how does that help me then clarify what the next step is after that?

**Igor:** I know you have a three-step process that allows you to monitor these things whilst, of course, your mouth and your intellect is more engaged in the actual linguistic elements. You have a very simple three-step process of things you pay attention to; to make sure you're still on track.

- **Could you share that with us?**

**John:** Sure. The main thing is to pay attention to the listener's physiology the entire time you're talking. One real bonus with this step, because this requires a fair amount of practice, but the idea is you're speaking only as much as you need to; to evoke a certain physiological response.

That could be skin color change, it could be eye blink reflex, it might even be the breathing rate all the things that I'm sure many of the folks that you've worked with have been trained to pick up.

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My main thing then is, as I'm doing that I want to have the process proceed at a pace where I can continue to track that. I can do that a lot faster than I used to be able to, but in the old days the value and real bonus of hypnosis in a more traditional vein is it slows everything down.

As long as you don't make too many compound suggestions with a client and you make a single suggestion and then you wait, first of all, their processing takes longer. It's just a part of classic trance, which gives you time to notice what's actually developing here. Then it gives you time to formulate what the next thing is that you're going to say.

**Igor:** Right. It gives you much more thinking time.

**John:** Exactly. The difference between where I started off and where I am now is in that quest to make things more conversational. The main thing you've got to get used to is that things speed up a lot more. You're having a regular conversation with somebody, so these states or these shifts in physiology that are occurring are much more fluid and happen in bunches sometimes, so it's not this real protracted process.

One of the things to realize though is that you can induce trance very easily conversationally as long as you have somebody who's interested in listening. Why? Because they're going to be fixated on your words.

Any time you watch somebody, if you go to a restaurant and you watch somebody who's leaning forward with their hand on their chin or leaning forward and they're getting ready to take a bite of a piece of food or something and they are completely engaged in what the other person is saying, you realizing they're holding that fork up there in the air, well they've got the arm catalepsy with levitation and they are completely transfixed on what is being said.

To me, the key element then is to realize that you can fixate their attention simply by staying engaged in the conversation with them and making the conversation relevant to them.

Then you don't have to say I want you to stare at point on the wall or something like that because why; that's actually having to do something that's really mechanical that might not be— they will think why is he having me do this as opposed to just keeping them engaged in whatever it is that they are saying.

**Igor:** Which is one of the reasons, of course, why storytelling can be such a powerful hypnotic device because most people are fascinated by stories; they get just sucked into them.



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**John:** **Fascination is a doorway to trance.** Fascination and fixation of attention and curiosity are all doorway states that essentially activate the subdominant hemisphere which we could call loosely speaking unconscious processing.

## Interview – Part 3

So, the idea then, when you're doing a more conversational approach, especially using trance is, it's not so much that you even have to be doing a lot of things deliberately as much as it is your own powers of observation about when the person is going in and out of trance.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** It's not so much about inducing it it's really more about catching it when it happens. All a trance induction is in my mind is it's creating a context where trance can occur naturally.

The idea then is that if I'm engaged in a conversation or when I'm telling a story and the person is really interested in what's being said and curious, then it's just a matter of noticing okay, well did their eye blink reflex stop?

Am I starting to notice that their cheeks are flaccid? Am I noticing that I'm getting sort of that ratchety kind of head nod that's very small and microscopic like they are nodding saying yes, but it's not the same quality that you would see if the person is shaking their head in a very vigorous conscious kind of way.

You start to notice those kinds of things and you realize my God, you're in a trance. You don't need to say anything to that person about that. The idea is that what you're really doing is tracking whether or not they are going in and out of trance as they are fascinated, curious about or engaged in what you're saying.

The idea is that it's not so much about inducing trance as much as recognizing it and then catching it when it happens naturalistically. Once that happens, you don't have to say to the person okay, now you're in a trance. You can just look at them and think to yourself you're now in a trance, so now what am I doing to do?

I'm going to say some really positive things to you that are in alignment with your outcome, or I might just start engaging you in some other line of conversation that I know is going to allow you to make really positive suggestions to yourself about how you could be doing this.

**Igor:** Just to summarize those three steps very briefly.

1. The first step is just getting used to observing people shifting physiologically from facial expressions, breathing rate, skin color, muscle tension all these sort of things, just getting used to seeing those things happen as they occur.

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Trance helps, of course, because it slows those things down and makes them more obvious, as a result of which it trains your perceptions a bit easier like training wheels.

2. The next thing to look out for, step two, is to fixate people's attentions on their conversations.

In other words, talk about things that will fascinate them, engage them and draw them in. Stories are good examples of something like that. It's limited to stories, of course.

3. Finally, once in that conversational phase where you are fixating their attention and you know what things to look out for, all you have to do is watch out for those things happening and those cycles.

They will dip in, they will dip out, they will dip in deeper, they will dip out, they will dip in again, and eventually they will dip in such a point where you know they are there; they're in that right space, at which point you can just offer your suggestions, offer new frames or create a context in which they access a new set of possibilities that you're not even suggesting, what I would call the 'trance of infinite possibilities.'

I think you call it 'the void', where it's basically a land grab anything is up for grabs. It could be good, bad or indifferent, but at least it's not the same as before.

**John:** Very well put.

**Igor:** Turning back to the idea of language a little bit. I know there are two particular linguistic devices or traditions that caught your attention early on and started the whole process of getting the more covert language stuff that you do going.

➤ **Can you tell us a little bit about that?**

**John:** Initially, I had two threads going at the same time.

1. One was an interest in linguistics.
2. The other one was I guess you would say patterning or at least ways of thinking coming more from a Buddhist perspective.

Not that I was a Buddhist or anything like that, but one of the conventions that Buddhism uses is something called a Zen Koan, which can be a phrase, a question or a parable that's offered to a student that the student is to go away and consider and then come back with an answer.

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The idea is with the Cohen is to take the student beyond their map of language, beyond the normal frames they think and in that way, if you will, come to their senses and have more of a direct experience of reality, whatever that is.

The most common one is what's the sound of one hand clapping?

These are questions that are designed to evoke more of what we would call a trans-directional search in the student to come up with a non-linear reply.

One that I read and actually used in a class just yesterday that was sort of a neat one was this.

Essentially, a monk comes to meet the Buddha, he's beyond the gate, the Buddha calls to him and says oh young monk, why do you not come meet with me? The monk said because I can't see anything beyond the gate. The Buddha says are you inside or outside of the gate?

If you're a normal person, and I like to think of myself as halfway normal, when I first read that story I had no idea what to do with it. It was like a ball that you have on a table that you rolled across the table that just drops off the end of the table and you go, what was that?

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** Because there's so much scope ambiguity and so little that's being said, you're engaged in this question that turns out to be an either/or question, which is the solution. But, the whole point there is it's to take this person into this place of what Alfred Korzybski— the developer of neurolinguistics, the original person that coined the term— speechlessness.

That's what really got me interested. The Buddhist notion of that is called the void. At the same time I was engaged in all of that, I was into looking at the time it was called the Meta-Model III, which was directionalized questioning.

I was starting to notice that the stuff that had the greatest effect on me was a lot of non-linear kinds of patterns and in particular, I started to notice that a lot of the really good people had very creative uses of negation or the word not.

This is in the old days now, it's not like that anymore, but at that time there were sort of patterns that were, if you reached the "inner circle" or the "inner sanctum" you would learn these certain patterns.

The one that got to be a little overused but was nonetheless pretty significant was the double not pattern or the not-not pattern, which creates a null set. It's the kind of thing like who wouldn't you be if you weren't you?

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**Igor:** Right.

**John:** I started to play with ideas like that and started to go okay, we can actually use this kind of processing to take a person using language to transcend language, to take them beyond their map where they're in direct experience or what we call obviously based on the conversation we've had so far, is it's just another form of trance.

It's just done in a very conversational way and actually more of an uptime kind of tempo rather than a slowed down soft voice kind of approach to it.

**Igor:** The thing that reminds me of this approach and it goes right back into the Zen parable, you told us a moment ago, is the effect that people have when you tell a joke or they tell a joke, and it's one of those really clever jokes that for a while no one gets and they sit there stunned going what is he going on about.

Then someone suddenly the penny drops and they will go oh, I get it and you have like a whole crowd of people, and it's hysterical when it happens because suddenly one person will start laughing out loud until there are tears streaming down their face and everyone else is going what's he doing?

Then, another person gets it, the same thing happens, and slowly but surely this ripple effect happens and as more people get it, they suddenly have this going from this void of blankness, what do I do with this, to the point where suddenly there's an opening or realization and the world just becomes a funnier, happier place as a result of it.

I've seen you do this many times. I've seen other people who use that same sort of approach doing it lots of times where you literally take people to a point where their minds can't process what just happened and then there's a moment where like a balloon, the tension pops and typically, there will be a lot of laughter involved.

That's not always the case, but it's very typical and you literally have this sort of moment of enlightenment where it all makes sense, and it all makes sense in a way that no one can really explain.

**John:** Yes, that's it. Very often the response is significant to the person, but they're still "at a loss for words" almost the same loss of words initially as they were in terms of trying to understand what the words were, that were the question that evoked that response in the first place.

**Igor:** Right.

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**John:** Those two ideas really, the use of language in a deliberate way to transcend itself inspired really by Cohen, gave birth to beyond words and that was the whole model that in the 90s Julie and I developed and then I've done a lot of work with it over the last 10 years or so.

That really is the whole point. Its how can you use directionalized questions, different kinds of linguistic patterning to take a person off their map, which can look like a number of things? It can just literally look like you've just pulled a plug out of somebody's brain and they are just sitting there in idle.

**Igor:** I've seen that look a few times.

**John:** To many times sometimes just intrigue but not knowing. A lot of times when I've experienced myself it's very much when you are the client you can sometimes even get like the so-called tip of the tongue phenomenon.

Meaning, that you think you almost have the idea grasped and then it starts to go away. Then you think you almost have it and it starts to go away, and you think you almost have it and then it goes away and then it's sort of like, just when you let your foot off the gas, bam, all of a sudden you say oh my God, I got it!

**Igor:** When people ask you, what have you got, it's like, I can't even begin to tell you!

**John:** Exactly. To me, that really is the future of doing this kind of work in a conversational way in my opinion and it's not because I had a hand in developing some of these things myself, it's just that it's fairly immediate, fairly fast and conversational.

There are some pretty set ways once you learn them that will be predictable in terms of taking people off their map where they'll have these experiences. Then it's just a matter of okay, now they've had the experience, not everybody comes out of the void so to speak with a crashing insight, but they're going to usually come out of it in some different place then they were when they started, i.e. with the problem.

At that point then, it's really what do you do with them once they are there? Are we going to have them go back into that kind of experience again? Are we going to use it to get them into some sort of resource state? That's sort of the whole second half of that model.

Its part of how do you get a person there in the first place, but then once they are there, what do you do with them then?

**Igor:** That's part of the whole conversational aspect of the model which I really love, which the idea is you get past this idea of having to have the ultimate big gun

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that shoots everything down with one bullet. It's just a question of saying look it's a conversation.

Conversations have a beginning, middle, and an end. So, you begin with whatever you begin with, whatever happens will be your middle, and you'll keep having a middle until it comes to a natural end at which point you're done.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** It takes a lot of pressure off you, doesn't it?

**John:** It does. I've only really come on to that in a significant way probably over the last maybe five or six years in a big way. It was on my mind before that but as time goes on I have more and more of an appreciation that going for that so-called big gun, going for the jugular therapy is completely antithetical frankly to how our nervous system changes naturally anyway.

Typically, it's all through iteration and recursion, meaning that we have an experience, we take whatever we get from that experience, that gets fed forward into the next experience, so we continue to do that and refine that.

You could be looking at many, many iterations and each time we go through one of those iterations, what it's doing inside our nervous system is it is literally strengthening nerve tracks, neural networks not just creating new associations but as per something called the quantum zeno effect.

What PET scans have been showing that's positron emission tomography, basically active pictures of our brain working. What that shows is that when a person keeps thinking the same thing over and over or going over the same territory if you will, it actually makes the nerves grow more muscular.

Meaning, the axon gets thicker and the cell body gets bigger. The dendrites arborize more, in other words, there are more branches that are made. So literally, what new science is showing us is that we can actually exercise our brains the same way we do if we exercise our muscles.

What does that have to do with Beyond Words? If we're doing something in multiple iterations, a lot of repeats where you're taking what they give you, then you're using that and taking the next step, each time you're doing that you're waking up the same neural network. So, as you do that you're actually strengthening that neural network over time which is exactly how the brain does it naturally anyway.

It's not about trying to get it all done in one fell swoop very often, because even if you do it in one fell swoop, you've still got to go through that conditioning process somehow.

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**Igor:** To clarify, what you're doing with people at that point is in the past they would have conditioned a problem.

In other words, it's like if you imagine your right arm is the problem arm and the stronger it gets, the more problems you have in your life. Then there's your left arm, that's your possibilities arm and creative solution arm, the more you lift weights with that arm, the more of that sort of stuff you get.

People who have a lot of problems in their lives are basically lifting things with their right arm all the time and get very good at it, because their brain literally becomes very, very good at seeking out finding problems and generating it. It's a fantastic skill they have, which unfortunately isn't very useful unless of course, you send them to your competitors and let them mess up their whole company. That might be a useful way of doing things.

If you look at the other side of it, what you're doing now is you're beginning with the same stimulus which is whatever happens in life; typically, whatever stimulates the problem.

Now, rather than the weight being picked up is you've got a barbell lying on the ground and someone is going to pick it up, but rather than letting them pick it up with their right hand, you're doing a little bit of a jiggery-pokery, so they accidentally end up picking it up with their left hand going oh, what's this, this is kind of heavy, I'm not familiar with this.

Each time they do it, they become more familiar with it and over time eventually the right arm becomes so much stronger than the right arm, the problem arm did, that hopefully the more experiences they have of this they start instinctively reaching out with the left arm, the solution arm than with the right arm.

**John:** Exactly. Then they have free choice, because at that point the arm— this is shameless, but I've got to do it, Igor— the creative arm that was left may end up being the right arm for them, in which case the right arm now is the one that's left for new possibilities that they hadn't considered.

**Igor:** That's right. There's nothing left for me to say other than that.

**John:** That's right. I'd say hands down we've exhausted that one, wouldn't you?

**Igor:** Yes well, amen to that and I'm putting my hands up in the air for you.

This takes us to something very interesting and this has opened the doors to what we'll be doing in the more seminar portion of this interview, which is there are some very important guiding themes that allow you to do this.



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We've already explored the idea of the not's and double negatives, the idea of the intellectual process of what created Zen Koan, and what allows us to create that conversationally so people are going to the same head space. Not necessarily for enlightenment about some spiritual enlightenment, but on a more practical day-to-day living sort of thing to overcome problems, fears, phobias, limitations, and so on.

There are a couple of themes that we're going to pull out which is important to your work.

The one is if you want to become a real master in your field, look outside of your field for influences that will actually allow you to become better at what you do in your field, because if you look inside the field, all you will find is more of whatever everyone else has found.

You might grow it incrementally a little bit, but if you want to make a real leap of discovery, you go somewhere else. For example, for you one of the big inspirations in developing this Beyond Words model was looking at Zen Koan. It's just like Buddhist spirituality, what the heck does that have to do with hypnosis?

However, by looking at it and looking at the construction of it, it formatted your mind in a way to look for language in a certain effect, which is what has worked to develop this very powerful model.

Those of you familiar with the mind-bending language stuff I teach, it's pretty much the same thing as John is talking about with Beyond Words. John's the person I got it all from, so if you like that sort of stuff then thank John. If you think there are some errors in it, then come and call me and tell me that I did it poorly, because believe me, when you see John in action it is just beauty in action.

One of the themes that we've discussed before and that's something that you will be showing us how to do in the seminar portion is how to take what seems like a completely irrelevant topic like say music, teasing out of that principles and ideas that will totally blow out traditional hypnotic approaches and make them into something really amazing because you're using this parallel thinking process.

That's one of the things you'll be showing us how to do, will you not?

**John:** Yes, that's true.

**Igor:** Now, the other thing you have, and this is part of the theme that's guiding your work particularly in the most recent time is the more cutting-edge stuff that you do.

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Again, it's related to the idea of Zen Koan and neuro science that we've been touching on right now, and it's something which is I think incredibly powerful; it's the idea of entering uncertainty on purpose. In other words, being certain and secure about uncertainty.

### ➤ Could you give us a little overview of those two themes?

I know we'll be looking at this in real detail when we get onto the actual seminars, but just give us a taste of what you mean by those two themes and how they interrelate with us, as hypnotists, and how they give us more power, more influence in terms of the use of our language and the process that we construct.

### ➤ How can that help us as a hypnotist?

**John:** One of the things when I talked about uncertainty. For me, the idea is that there will always be more of what we don't know than what we do. If we're willing to actually stop for a moment and consider even what we call the future is basically a construction. It's what we think will happen.

The past is what we thought happened. If we had 10 people all get together in the same room and try to discuss exactly what happened at a certain time and date chances are there would be a lot of different interpretations. The basic idea is that uncertainty is all around us.

To go into the idea that you're talking about with mastery, here's the way I look at it. Going into what's already known, all that you're going to get is some re-combinations of what is already known, so the only place where true possibility truly exists is in what you don't know.

Therefore, any time you think about uncertainty, just cross out that word in your mind and write possibility, because that's where possibility lives.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** It's just that most of us, because of our social conditioning which is significant in most cases, we've been taught to grasp onto almost any kind of idea so that we have some certainty, even if it is completely illusory, like a future goal that we make we can make it feel like its real. We can structure.

We can use it as a heuristic, as an organizing principle for our current life. We can be living our whole life around something that's nothing more than just a construction, but we're willing to do that, instead of having to deal with the fear that most of us get into if we think about uncertainty that we really don't know.

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**Igor:** Right.

**John:** For me, the basic idea is okay well, if you try to live in certainty, eventually what's going to happen is life will usually blindside you.

Meaning that you were so focused in and living in a such a small frame that it leaves a lot of room for things to come into your life and you go oh my God, this is awful or oh, I wasn't prepared for that, as opposed to what if somebody actually learns to teach their nervous system each day to introduce a little bit of uncertainty into their life on purpose?

If you're willing to do that, don't you think you would be far better prepared to handle those things that truly are things that happen and you go, oh wow, I wasn't expecting this? Why? Because just like an athlete trains for an event; you've been training for it for a period of time, it's not even about really even going oh, I can tread water or I can manage this uncertainty.

How about, can you learn to actually thrive in it? Can you actually learn to use it as a springboard that will take you beyond where you would have ever imagined because now you've introduced this whole other variable or the world has, life has, introduced this whole other variable that you can use to consider a new way of being or a new way of approaching a certain way of living, or something like that.

**Igor:** A really nice analogy. I'm not sure if I heard you use it or someone else, is the analogy of people going on a date. When you first start dating someone, everything is new. Everything is fresh. Everything is exciting. Somehow the whole world gets infected by your enthusiasm for life that springs out of essentially uncertainty.

You don't know the person. You don't know if they'll like you. You don't know if you will discover something that will shock you or they will discover something about you that will make them like you less. But, every time you purposely step into that place of uncertainty – you go out with them on a date, you talk, you chat, you share stories so you share vulnerability and whatever it is.

It's a tremendous buzz because you are totally uncertain what's going to come next and you're constantly being surprised with how good the uncertainty really is. In other words, when the uncertainty becomes slightly more certain, it's a tremendous hit of wow, this is so good; it's better than I expected it to be.

Of course, when you know a person really well, this is where relationships can run into problems because there is no uncertainty there anymore. It becomes so stale and rigid, now one person wants to grow in a direction that isn't within that certainty parameter anymore and that's when people start feeling stifled,

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because they can't be more of who they really are because you have to be everything that you think that they should be or vice versa.

You have to be everything you think they think you should be. That contains you in certainty which is secure, but of course the sparkle, the juice of life disappears at that point.

**John:** Exactly. For me, it's like you said, the beginning is sort of easy in relationships in the sense that there's so much more unknown than known that every interaction that you have with that person is an opportunity; you can be curious.

It's an opportunity for discovery. There is an energy that goes along with that because these two people have been living their separate lives and now they come together and they start to communicate.

It's just like you said to me, after a person "gets to know" the other person or they think they get to know each other, that's where the real problem starts, because that's when they start mind reading and thinking they know what the other person means instead of checking it out, which is a potential way of bringing in more information.

And/or, as you said, they get locked into the certainty trance so much that they are no longer bringing things outside of the relationship inside the relationship to energize it.

**Igor:** Right. That takes us to the other points.

We've got the idea of uncertainty and the joy of being uncertain which is something we'll be focusing on in the seminar portion, right.

**John:** Yes, that's correct.

**Igor:** The second element which I think is just related with something you said a moment ago which is, you go outside of the relationship to bring that sparkle back into it. That's really another theme you have in terms of the parts of mastery, which is you go outside of the discipline in this case of hypnosis, that's the relationship with something called hypnosis.

You go outside of the field of hypnosis to bring something back into it that re-energizes, so you actually understand something you do well in a better way, or you suddenly come up with an idea that no one has ever come up with before, purely and simply because it didn't exist within that field before so you had to go outside for a little bit of a glimmer of fairy dust that allowed the magic to pop up within that, right.

**John:** Yes, and that was a lovely segue, by the way.

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**Igor:** Thank you very much.

**John:** Yes. To me, that is always the key thing whenever you're learning something new play with the idea that you're learning something new or even if it's something that you know pretty well but you want to break new ground, that might be a better example, the thing to do is have something else that you're doing as a parallel process along with that.

For me, that other field has often been for many years, quantum mechanics. In fact, it still is, really. I would go there and I would get ideas, metaphors and so forth that when I would bring it back into the field of NLP I would have a whole different take on it.

For me, just as a small example, when I read a quote by Einstein that said, *"Anything that's been created in what we would call our world or the physical world is the function of a certain formula and it's called time plus space plus matter plus energy equals creation."*

So, everything has to have a time that it occurs. It could be a period of time but it's related to time. It occurs in a certain space or location. It has a certain form, and it has a certain kind of energy or movement to it.

Once I was onto that idea I thought you know, you could re-chunk all of NLP just based on those ideas. So, some patterns directly affect the person's relationship to time, how the problem is a function of time or space, which is called a context reframe, or working with energy, which in NLP is called strategies.

All of these kinds of ideas I started to realize God, so if I just had a conversation with a person and as they are talking about the problem, if I can manipulate where they are in time in relation to that, moving in the past, moving in the future, whatever, changing the context think about it in this situation and think about it in that situation; changing the form of what it is.

Well, maybe it's not really anger you're talking about, maybe it's passion you're talking about that's happening here, and how you want to express that.

What started to happen was I had a whole different take on how to really work with people and do it conversationally. That all came from just reading a little statement that Einstein had made that had nothing to do with linguistics or NLP or anything.

**Igor:** The interesting thing for me is listening to you talk about this and we've had many discussions about similar something particular in your time, energy, matter, space, and so on; even now you can hear just listening to you talking

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about it, there's still that sparkle of excitement and enthusiasm left in you when you think about that little quote and all the implication that it brings to you.

I can tell for a fact, and I know you know this also, that there's still a lot of mileage left in that small seed of a thought anyway on top of what you're doing to take you even further to places that you haven't considered yet.

**John:** Absolutely. You definitely picked up on the energy.

It's actually something that I'm playing around with right now, just the last couple of weeks I've sort of gone back into that area, but I've applied it more around the idea of changing our identity, how our identity is linked to all of those different parameters and what some simple ways are that we can do that as a personal growth technique or if we're working with clients.

So yes, you're right. You and I have discussed another big one that we'll probably get into the next time is music.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** A lot of the metaphors, a lot of what I've learned about language, especially the delivery has come from music. Most of my key inspirations in life have come from music, whether I was thinking about NLP at the time or not it's had a profound effect on my ability to teach and my ability to think about different constructs inside of hypnosis and NLP.

**Igor:** One of the things, and this is going to come out much more in the seminar portion of the interview, one of the reasons I'm excited about talking to you in particular about music – people should know John is actually himself a very gifted musician – he does it more for love than for pay, but you do some great music. He combines everything he knows about the other fields.

There's neuroscience in somebody's music. In other words, tones that change your brain state in different ways. There are elements of music in his actual hypnotic delivery as well. For example, something will be coming into is just the simple things which a lot of people pay lip service to, but have no idea how to actually acquire for themselves, which are things like delivery.

### ➤ **How do you deliver a set of hypnotic suggestions?**

You can just say relax and that itself has no real quality to it, but if you just put a little rhythm into it – everybody, just relax – suddenly but putting something musical in which in this sense is rhythm and tone, you've changed experiences. This way the whole suggestion has become three-dimensional rather than some flat two-dimensional concept.

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That's just touching the tip of the iceberg of what music has to offer us as hypnotists, as people who professionally alter people's states and their realities. That's something we'll be doing a lot more exploration over in the actual seminar portion, is that correct?

**John:** That's correct.

**Igor:** That's something for everyone to look forward to, and apart from those things, the actual content of how music maps over to hypnosis and allowed us to deliver it more eloquently, be more powerful as hypnotists and actually make hypnosis easier for us as hypnotists as well.

We enter our own personal transfer rhythm as hypnotists, which allow this stuff to bubble forward and the other level which I'm going to invite you guys to really focus on that as a sequence of ideas that we will be presenting is, in terms of the pattern itself.

John's been talking a lot about the pattern of you go outside the field to find patterns which aren't in your field and you bring the patterns across and then your field become enriched. That's something that they can pick up very quickly from our discussions.

➤ **In other words, when we look at music, what are you looking at John?**

When you're thinking about music, be it guitar music, sounds, rhythms or the technical elements like pictures and tones, what are you looking for within those patterns, which when taken out of the context of music, placed into the context of hypnosis and trance, allows us to be much more powerful hypnotists.

When you can do that with music, when you can see at least the guiding themes that you do that with music with, then you can do it with anything.

- ✓ You can do it with literature.
- ✓ You can do that with physics.
- ✓ You can do that with art.
- ✓ You can do that with the other sciences.
- ✓ You can do that with martial arts.
- ✓ You can do that with sports.
- ✓ You can do that with how children socialize and interact with each other.
- ✓ You can do that by watching The Discovery Channel.

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Everywhere you go your mind suddenly starts looking for things that will teach you how to be a better hypnotist, at least, that's how I do it. If anyone wants to know the secret of where all these ideas I come up with come from, that's it. We're about to explore exactly how to do that in the next session.

**John:** That's exactly right, Igor.

**Igor:** So, I'm very excited. I hope everyone else is excited as well.

Before we finish up, there's one last thing I'd like to just sort of mention, which we've touched upon really at the beginning of this interview, which is that area of how do you actually get good at actually doing it, in other words, the supervision groups.

I know that you have something very valuable, which I've actually been a member of for some time and got a lot of value from. It's basically a kind of a virtual supervision group called TCU, Telecoaching U.

- **Could you tell us a little bit about what the concept of Telecoaching U is about?**
- **How that allows people to get supervised practice in some of your latest ideas and models as well as actually just getting in there and doing the work?**

It's both for people who want more cutting edge ideas, but it's also for people who just want to get in there and have someone guide them through their first steps into actually doing the work for real.

**John:** Sure. Telecoaching U was conceived from the experience I originally had when I first was involved with NLP and that was just how valuable supervision was. One of the things that we do is every month we'll have everybody call in on a bridge line and one person will present a real issue.

We have dealt with some pretty significant issues over the years, one person is the coach and then what I do is I coach the person in real time who is coaching the client, so that any point if I think something is going in a direction that may or may not be useful, I might call a time out and make some suggestions. The person jumps back in, begins to work with the client.

Or, if at any point they get stuck and aren't sure where to go, what they can do is call a time out. There's no judgment or evaluation in that sense because we all are on the call to get better. I even encourage people look, if you just want to call time out because if you were typically working with a client you wouldn't have the luxury to discuss what all your options are, at this point in the session, you can do that.



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What most people have told me that done this over a period of time is that it really has created a quantum leap in their ability to get better, because you're getting, if you will, the course correction right as you're doing it in real time there's no lag there, so it's a lot easier to integrate it and incorporate it.

**Igor:** Just to give people more of a feel of how the thing works and please correct me if you've altered the format at all, but basically you have three sessions.

1. The first session is roughly an hour or so long.

You've introduced a completely new way of looking at things a new topic, a new idea, something which can be totally off in one direction. Sometimes it's completely something you're familiar with, but basically it's to stimulate your brain to think about the whole idea of coaching and using this use of language in a new way, in a way you haven't thought about before.

2. The second session is the supervision session where someone gets to volunteer to be a client.

Someone gets to volunteer to actually do the coaching, get coached through it and you can rotate where as time goes by, everyone gets a chance at doing this.

3. The final session is like a question and answer session where you get to sit down and just pick John's brain and say you know, I've got these clients, I've been doing these things, these things have been happening. I've always wondered about what could I do differently.

Or, this thing is happening to me and I really don't know how to resolve it; what would you suggest? Or, you mentioned something interesting some time ago or I read something interesting some time ago which said this, what's your opinion of this or could you clarify this point?

Therefore, you get all the different angles of your learning covered there. It's a really worthwhile course. It's really worthwhile doing it. As I said, I myself have been through it and have had some valuable insights in there.

Actually, the thing about it now, it appears I've got the order mixed up so you start with the supervision so you're actually doing it. Then you get the information calls, so you get some further stimulation on thinking through things. Then you get the Q&A call so you have a nice sequence of doing, thinking, asking and the cycle kind of continues through.

I know you have a course which is directly related to what we talked about today. Actually, people have a taste of what it's like to be on the supervision calls. It's called 'Thriving Through Uncertainty'.

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### ➤ Can you tell us a little bit about that?

This is something that you're doing kind of a special offer on for people who've got this interview, so they need to contact you and tell you about this interview and then they can have a special offer on that so that they can get a taste of what it's like to work with you on TCU.

**John:** Sure. It's called 'Thriving Through Uncertainty'; listen to the ambiguity there.

I took probably a theme that had been in about many five-Telecoaching U classes and decided to open it up to people who were outside at that time, outside of the main group for the general public. I did theories, roughly two-hour sessions which took ideas that really came through quantum mechanics.

A fun thing to think about is quantum mechanics, what are the principles from quantum mechanics that are directly related to how we create a reality that you can use in your everyday life that are just really straightforward, yet at the same time will give you a completely different point of view. That was a big part of it.

Then, what are the approaches or techniques that you can use in everyday life that are applications of these theories. Just to throw a couple things out, for example, there is what we would call a linguistic construction. There is a way that sometimes people set goals, a way that people approach life that's based on a particular linguistic construction that essentially is the root of most people's suffering.

If you knew what that was, that could be useful, but if you knew how to actually resolve that in yourself, wouldn't that be a whole lot more useful? So, those are some of the ideas that are the chief ideas, and then there's really a number of step-by-step processes that I teach folks to use basically to live their life more creatively and hopefully effectively.

I know that the feedback I got from the course was great. It was sold out when we offered it. We literally had to turn people away because the bridge line was too full, and I've continued to get good follow up from people saying that the techniques are useable, the approach has been very useful for them.

I'm excited about that obviously, along with it I included a couple studio inductions that I made just particularly for that class so that you have something to listen to, to go over the pattern there, about 20-minute inductions with the process embedded inside of the inductions.

**Igor:** I think that's going to be a very useful course, particularly for those of you who happened to train with John before, you have a real nice taste of John's style.

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Of course, those of you who are in the Private Hypnosis Club will be able to download the seminar portion to this interview as well, the one where we look into the idea of uncertainty, what music has to teach us in terms of being greater hypnotists and that will be there for you in the next week, so come back and listen up for that, you will get a lot of stuff from that.

If you want to check out John's work he is at [JohnOverdurf.com](http://JohnOverdurf.com). Just go to his website and feel free to drop him a line he's very friendly and doesn't bite. I think all that remains for me to say at this point is John, thank you so much for taking time, extra time, actually to go in-depth with us on this interview.

I have enjoyed this and I'm very excited about the seminar portion because I know we're going to get our sleeves rolled up and get into some practical, powerful and insightful things we can do to become better hypnotists, basically.

**John:** I look forward to that Igor, and I really want to thank you also for conceiving this idea and offering me to be a part of it. I dig talking to you. I always have a blast talking to you.

I think we do a pretty good job of feeding off each other. I know when you light up, you've got a great inductive mind and that inspires me. Hopefully, what I do inspires you and we get this really neat cycle going. I'm sure that will happen in the seminars.

**Igor:** I have no doubt about that. All I can say is expect for some mind-warping ideas to come out because although we've got some ideas that we're going to be aiming for, some threads that we'll be pulling out, there is never any telling quite where we'll end up when John and I end up having a discussion like this.

You all are about to see some real fireworks going off. I'm totally excited for that reason alone. I look forward to seeing you in the next call, and thank you so much for coming on this one.

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### End of Interview

This is Igor Ledochowski from [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). If you're interested in finding out more about our hypnosis training programs, just go to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com).

We have over 30 different programs on all aspects of hypnosis and self-hypnosis and if you want to listen to John's seminar giving away his amazing advanced hypnosis secrets, then go to [StreetHypnosis.com/john](http://StreetHypnosis.com/john).

# Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

## Seminar 1 – Part 1

**Igor:** Welcome to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski and I'm here with Master Hypnotist John Overdurf. Welcome back John.

**John:** Hi Igor, how are you?

**Igor:** I'm very well and, as I said to you before, I'm very excited about today. So if you've been listening to the interview with John so far, you'll get a bit of an appreciation just how broad and deep John's knowledge is and today we're going to be digging into some of the things you know and some of the more, shall we say esoteric or unusual ideas.

I believe the idea of this John is that we want to show people the power of thinking outside of the box. Of finding a field that you maybe love like music, physics or whatever it is and within that there are gems that is going to help us, as a hypnotist, understand our discipline better and actually come up with some very cool, new ideas, concepts and techniques that no one else has thought about, right.

**John:** That's the whole idea. I think, as we were mentioning in the interview, if you look inside the field there might be some combinations that you'll notice here and there that other people haven't made or you might notice certain distinctions that other people may or may not have made, but you're never going to shift the entire paradigm, in my opinion.

I think you have to look outside the field to extend the metaphor, rather than just add detail to the metaphor that's already there.

**Igor:** Now, this kind of fits into the theme that we sort of broached during the interview a little bit, which I know is a major theme in your work and one I particularly love. I think it puts a lot more balance into what we do, because as hypnotists or NLP people whatever, we like to think that this is certainly one technique that gets the result every time, every single client and they'll always go out happy.

Of course, clients come in with the same attitude, like life is too big; I can't deal with this mess called life, make me confident, make me sure and make me certain about everything that's going to happen. It's one of those cases where, very often, it's the very thing that you think you want is the very thing that you don't need, right.

**John:** Exactly. What I've found in working with people is that I guess you can type problems in lots of different ways, but for me there are two big categories.

One is what I would call 'problem of certainty'.

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That is where the person comes in and they point blank just say to you, look, I've got a phobia to dogs. They are utterly and completely certain about it because they have lots of evidence that suggests that that's the problem.

Those are usually the ones that I think people who know specific change techniques and so forth feel real comfortable working with because, let's just say it fits inside of a box, so both people feel sort of secure. The client feels secure because they know what they're dealing with, in a sense, they just don't know what to do about it and the hypnotherapist feels good about it because oh, it's this type of problem I know what to do here.

One of the things in starting to take apart or destabilizing the problem by definition, is you have to add something to the problem called 'uncertainty'. So one of the ways to think about it, rather than just trying to go in and apply a technique, one of the things that has always been my preference, is to do something to loosen up the problem construction before we even get rolling.

**Igor:** This is role about things like the meta model, deep questioning and playing with some of the ambiguities in people's own form of reference. That's where that comes in, it's destabilizing their grip on what's actually real there.

**John:** Exactly. What you're looking at, in a way, is what's the person's reality strategy? So, in other words, how do they know that a problem is a problem? Literally, it's the answer to that question and very often how they know is more important to target your intervention toward than even what they say the problem is.

For example, if a person says well, I'm having problems with life right now. You say well, how do you know? They say well, because when I think about the future I start to get anxious. So if I say back to the person something like, okay, so if you were feeling some other way, if you were feeling comfortable about the future would you still think that you had this big problem with life. No.

So the idea is we're going at that because very often the reality strategy is something that the person develops, on their own unconsciously; it's just simultaneity or contiguity. Their mind pairs two things together and they say this is how I know I have this problem.

The idea is if you introduce some uncertainty you can make that boundary sort of wobbly sometimes or you can at least start to make it a little bit more permeable so they start to go oh, well maybe the form of this problem isn't as solid as I thought it was.

You want to get it so wobbly that a picture I've always had in my mind is it's like something that's sitting right on the fence and it can sort of wobble either on the side back towards what the problem is or on some other side, which we could

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call the outcome or something and then it's just a matter of directionalizing the language in that way. So even if they have a problem of certainty, the first thing you want to do is introduce some uncertainty to open up some possibilities that weren't there for them. That's the one kind.

The one that you were referring to, I think in your initial set up here, is the one that is not as easy for most therapist/coaches to deal with and those are problems of uncertainty. That's where the person comes in and they say my life is a mess and I don't know what's wrong.

- ✓ Or, I don't know what to do with my life.
- ✓ Or, I have sort of this sense that something is wrong.
- ✓ Or, I'm just not living my life the way I want and I don't know what to do about it.
- ✓ Or, it could be a different class of situations, particularly the way the world is right now, which is I had a good job, I don't have it any more.

We've got debt building up and I don't know what to do about this. The whole thing is just completely overwhelming to me. I don't know when or where I'm going to get my next job. Things like that.

**Igor:** It seems to me that very often it's exactly this class of problems, the uncertainty-type problems, that have the biggest impact on the hypnotist in sucking the hypnotist into that negative reality of the client and making you go my God, you're right you really are screwed, what the hell are you coming to me for I don't know what to do about this.

**John:** I agree.

**Igor:** There's something in the nature of that, because it doesn't directionalize you towards a simple problem. There's no simple solution. Then you start thinking there's nothing for me to hold onto as a therapist and that's where the problem starts spiraling for us as the actual doers of the work.

**John:** The tip-off is that if we, the therapist, get into that mode where we're going holy smokes this person's in bad shape here, what would I do if I was in the situation, usually what's happened at that point is that you have stepped inside of their frame.

Even though it's a problem of uncertainty, what's happened is you've stepped into their frame and you're almost attempting to try to solve the problem for them in a very practical way, rather than looking at what's really the form of the problem that they're giving me right now. The reason why it's so easy to get sucked in when you're the therapist in this case, is because uncertainty will always be a larger frame than certainty.

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It's always going to be bigger. No matter how big we make something that we're certain about, everything else is always going to be bigger than whatever it is that we're paying attention to in the moment.

**Igor:** In many respects, I think part of the problem would be for us is if we're not used to uncertainty ourselves as hypnotherapists, then we're projecting into them by putting ourselves in their shoes and asking what would I do? Well, the answer is I'd probably panic just the way you're doing, so I have no idea to tell you to do, as opposed to figuring out and actually realizing, hang on a second, what you're telling me is actually an illusion.

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** This whole problem doesn't exist. It only exists in your mind, it's really the consequence of something else and we know with that something else we actually have a lot of certainty, which if I understand you correctly, the certainty that we absolutely have is about uncertainty.

If they can manage to deal with uncertainty more, you know be able to face the big, bad world which they've always had a job in, but now be jobless and actually figure out other ways of making their way through it, then that's actually a bigger gift than to just turn around and say ah, well you need to see so and so and tell them about this and this.

Then you'll be able to get a job there, no problem and you'll polish these skills up and you'll be fine that's advice giving. That's the kind of stuff that, on a lower level, schools try and give people, but it never seems to quite work out that way.

**John:** No, it doesn't because as soon as you get into advice giving...the way I always picture it is it's like you have this huge ocean that we could call uncertainty and what's happened is now you're going to point a person to an island in the middle of that ocean and say there's your certainty.

But what they're soon going to discover is that they're very limited by that. It may or may not be where they want to end up and then they still have to deal with the fact that there's more uncertainty in their life than there is certainty, at any given point in time.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** So even in the case of it being a problem of uncertainty, interestingly enough, the solution isn't to try to take the person into certainty right away; it's initially to again, take them beyond what they were thinking so that now the former uncertainty that they were considering, if you will, is now actually smaller than some other uncertainty that you've introduced.

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Another way to think about it is that whenever you're stuck or feeling overwhelmed there are a couple possibilities. One of the easy things to do is to expand the field so it's bigger than whatever the problem is that you're considering.

**Igor:** So, you're basically saying look at all this confusion in the world. With all the confusion you could have had you've only chosen this small amount isn't that a lot more manageable now by contrast, is essentially, what you're saying without actually saying it.

**John:** Exactly and it's really to set up counter examples like that so that they end up, or we end up, depending on if we're doing it for ourselves, understanding. As you said, there's a contrast there and you start to go okay. That's when you start to feel your body relax and get resourceful. Then the key thing is to just look at what is the smallest next step in light of this new way that we're feeling.

**Igor:** Right, I was just thinking about what you said in terms of you give more uncertainty. One example would be you have a small little corner of uncertainty, which is where they're afraid and you point out all the other uncertainty to make it, by contrast, not that big a deal.

But I guess part of what you're doing there, thinking about it, is that when someone comes to you saying I'm uncertain about life, I keep having these panic attacks or this fear and I don't know how to deal with things and so on. Ironically, they're pretty sure about that.

They're pretty certain that situation (X) for most of their life, it might just be their working life or whatever it is, is totally out of control, totally uncertain, totally something they don't have a handle on; therefore, by introducing uncertainty you're destabilizing their certainty about the problem being fixed, that their problem can't transmute that there isn't hope.

Because, when you have uncertainty you can say one thing for sure, which is you don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** It could be that you're being fired might be the very best thing that's ever happened to you, because now you'll finally get to do that project or when your best friend calls you up and says I've got this great opportunity for you, you can jump on it. People just don't know about that and it's because they don't think that way that the fear and all these other things come along, right.

**John:** Exactly. Now that we've said what we've said, I think if I say this it will make sense. Even if a person comes in and the form of their problem is they have



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too much uncertainty in their life, that still is a form. And, as soon as you have a form what you have to do to destabilize the form is to basically go beyond it.

Then, once again, it's smaller in relationship to everything else. And then, of course, the other big piece and we mentioned this during the interview, I believe, is that the only place where you're going to find true, fresh possibility is within uncertainty.

So the very thing that most people are afraid of is also, ultimately, their freedom and their liberation in terms of new ways of considering how they could be living their lives or what they could be doing in certain situations that they've not done before.

**Igor:** Let me just take that point in two directions. The one thing I just want to point out to everyone listening and I think you'll laugh when you hear this because you'll agree with this in many ways, just listen to what kind of things John has been saying to us.

One thing I hear a lot is the beginning of what you would call, John, directionalized ambiguities or beyond words, what we would call mind bending language, is starting to come out but it happens naturally as a result of how we're thinking. We're saying things like beyond the problem, what else aren't you certain about that you can be sure of?

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** People go, what the hell are you talking about that just does not make sense? But it does make sense when intellectually we're seeing these different concepts and going oh, hang on a second. He's got a rigid pattern of uncertainty in this little domain here.

There's big uncertainty around there and we have to make the boundary condition a bit more wobbly so that we can introduce the positive uncertainty, which is called things like excitement. I think we talked in the last interview a little bit about a date is exciting, because it's uncertain and injecting some of that positive uncertainty in is the one thing that they're not allowing to happen.

So now, we've got this whole slew of things going on, but it allows us to just be curious about someone in a way that naturally our words become mind bending, become these directionalized ambiguities that have a trance the affect on people.

**John:** Exactly. I think the other big piece with that is that while the linguistic construction as you're saying there -- that's a nice example of one that a lot of us would use in this circumstance -- the other key element is how you deliver it and sort of the look on your face and all that.

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Here's the element. It has to do with if the person all of a sudden now is starting to feel differently, but maybe they're not even aware that they are yet. Because, remember, as hypnotherapists we're always going to have about half a second heads up on the client, because it takes about a half a second for their conscious awareness to know what's been happen unconsciously.

So, if we start to see that a person is starting to feel differently and now, we do the directionalized ambiguity where we say so aside from what you were feeling there, considering everything that you would want to have in your life that you don't know about right now, what would you like to have happen?

You start to throw those kinds of things in and now what's happened is they springboard from a state that already is feeling resourceful so when you open up the field, even though you're opening up the field of uncertainty once again, you're opening it up while they're already starting to feel differently, so they're going to open up a completely different part of the field, so to speak, then where they had been when they had the problem.

**Igor:** This is kind of the whole beauty of what you're doing. Because as far as they're concerned or as far as actually most people listening, even if they're looking out for it are concerned, you're just spinning them around in a washing machine.

What you're doing is the spin has purpose, it has direct, except most people don't realize it because they're not seeing that now that person has a little pile of gold they just found that you can dive into it to find more of it.

**John:** Exactly. To reiterate what you were beginning to talk about there, I think when you realize that what you say is going to come from what your thought processes are that's what makes this kind of languaging so much easier. If I'm always thinking about okay, in order for a person to have a problem there's something they have to be paying attention to, so there's a target of their attention.

There's a source of the attention, meaning there's a certain perspective that they have. The perspective might be that they're looking up at it or it might seem big compared to them. It could be that they're looking at it from somebody else's point of view and not their own.

So, in other words, the actual source of the attention could be different and then there's the quality of attention or what I call the type and that is essentially, are they expanding out, are they opening up their processing or are they starting to go into more a deductive kind of processing, which is more like tunnel vision.

So you have these three factors, the source of their attention and the type of attention and then you have what they're paying attention to, the target.

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Typically, in NLP the thing we spend a whole lot of time on is what's the trigger or, what is it they're paying attention to? The key element for me is it's any one of those three or any of them in combination. It's like a formula; those are what create some sort of output.

If you shift any one, two or three of those significantly enough, the person won't be able to have the same experience. Then it's just a matter of getting them to have a different experience long enough that you stabilize that and essentially take them back to what the problem was while they're in the new state to collapse it.

**Igor:** So to kind of put what you just said in another way, it's kind of like the three key elements for you, as far as you're concerned anyway, that create reality. There are three key ingredients which are almost the DNA of reality.

There's the tension point, the target, what type of tension you're using and where it's coming from. As you change the sequence of a DNA, the angle of where their tension comes from, the sub modalities you like of the actual target and all these different things, you change their very perception of reality because now the ingredients are different. A different mix of the cake makes a different cake.

All you're doing now is mixing the different ingredients up, just check each time what's going on and you realize that a little bit more of this tends to have a bit more of a positive effect, so we'll give him a whole bunch more and we'll just reduce some of the other things there instead and see where that takes us. Then you can go through the whole trial and error process to figure out which one works best.

**John:** Exactly. To sort of connect back up with the idea of going outside the field to get inspirations, that whole idea, where I started getting hooked into that idea, was in quantum mechanics.

There are a couple of neat models out there and one of them is a guy named Henry Stap who has dedicated quite a bit of his life, probably the last 10 or 15 years, trying to take the language of quantum mechanics, which is fundamentally mathematics and convert it into what we would call regular language, so that they can explain some of the things in, let's say straight talk, as straight as you can get, and apply it then directly to human consciousness.

So rather than just the idea of subatomic particles, what is there that still has validity for macro systems called a human being rather than just micro systems called a quark or something like that.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** His model, that I think he did a job with, got me into the attention thing and starting to think more closely about that.

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1. Number one, he talks about what's called the Heisenberg Choice.

Werner Heisenberg was, of course, considered one of the cofounders of quantum mechanics and, interestingly enough, probably his most well-known theory is called the Principle of Uncertainty. But, what his whole idea was that he said we have one completely magnificent choice as we go through life and that is that we have the ability to choose what questions we pose to nature, as he would say.

So, while we don't control everything that's going on, the one thing that we do have control over is what questions do we actually ask. Now in sort of, if you will, the auditory digital frame, meaning questions, all I did was flipped it into all systems and I just thought well okay, so what that means is from a visual point of view, what are we looking at?

What are we paying attention to? What is it that we're choosing to pay attention to, given that there's this reality that's much more than what we could ever know and beyond all of that. Yet, at the same time we still have the choice to decide where we shine the spotlight, so to speak.

2. So that was the one and then the second, of course, is the Duraque Choice and Jacques Duraque was another physicist later on.

He said okay, not only do we have the ability to ask what question we want of nature, but also the other one he said is we also have choices about what measurement is made when nature answers back. In other words, how do we actually experience what the answer is that we get back? What's our reaction to it? How do we measure it?

To put that in simple psychological terms, in other words...

- ✓ Do we see it?
- ✓ Do we hear it?
- ✓ Do we feel it?
- ✓ Do we think it?
- ✓ Do we smell it?
- ✓ Do we taste it?

How do we actually get our answer back, number one, and then what's our reaction to that information.

- ✓ Do we feel good about it?
- ✓ Do we not feel good about it?

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What actual emotional reaction do we have to it? So, to me, that's a huge amount of choice.

**Igor:** It strikes me as something very interesting, what you're saying there, in terms of both the Heisenberg choices and the Duraque questions or the Duraque choices, which is, essentially, all these things have a variation of the theme of presuppositions in them.

If you're asking a question of nature, you're basically assuming certain things about the way the world works so you're just going to ask a question based on that, much like someone who can't conceive of flight asking, how can I get across the continent more quickly or how can I run more quickly across this continent? They can't even conceive of flight or using a vehicle or anything like that, just because it's outside of their reality.

The same is true of most of the Duraque choice as well, which is you've got a different frame of reference when information comes in. We know this already. You have the same event, an accident or someone's raising their voice in a restaurant or something and one person will be amused by it, another will be shocked by it and yet another will be intimidated by it.

It's exactly the same event and it all comes back to what our own frame of reference was looking at it. I guess that's one of the reasons why, first of all, different scientists cover the same ground so many times, but only one of them will turn around and come up with some blinding insight. That's because their personal frame of reference has allowed them to do this.

If we apply that to ourselves, I guess what we would do by going outside the field of say hypnosis, we're widening our frames of reference, which when we come back into hypnosis again and look at it with those extra frame of references, we have a lot more, shall we say enhanced choices of what to make of the answers we're getting back from people and, hence, it won't probably be the same thing again.

**John:** Exactly. A real simple example, just in the physics field I think many people may have heard of, is when Einstein developed his 'Theory of Relativity', essentially what he did was he imagined, he visualized, what it would be like to be riding on a light beam, so to speak and then he imagined what it would be like if he was observing somebody that was riding on one.

So he stepped completely outside of, let's say the system that most people would use to try and make those discoveries, which was called 'mathematics'. What he did was he used his imagination and through his imagination he got the inspiration and it took him roughly seven years to find the math to be able to describe what his imagination was able to conjure up.

**Igor:** Okay.

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**John:** So, he went outside the system and made that giant leap and then once he had the leap then he was able to go back and then he did the hard work, if you will, to actually figure out how to build a ladder so that other people can get to the same place that I got to in my imagination in a predictable way and we can use that as a sound theory.

**Igor:** Right, so he's kind of using his left and his right brain. The idea, the process of proving something and working an idea out, but before we can have something to work out there's a moment of inspiration and intuition that says there's something over here and even if I'm wrong about it I'll at least learn something of it in trying to prove it.

Sometimes that's the case, we'll come up with inspiration and we'll think this is the best thing ever and in the process of examining how much of that is actually correct and how much it actually works in the real world; we'll learn that maybe this idea wasn't the right one, but it certainly opens up a whole new field of possibilities we hadn't considered before. So it's never a waste of time, is it?

**John:** No and that's the whole paradigm in a nutshell, what you were just saying there. The idea is if we introduce uncertainty, particularly in a therapeutic environment, we might have some idea of where the person might go based on their history and so forth, but ultimately we don't.

But what we can do is we can go, okay, this person is in the void. They're essentially in a momentary trance or reverie and you start to see a smile come up on their face. You see them take a deep breath like their breathing has shifted and they're starting to relax more. Then you say what are you noticing now and the person says back to you something well I don't know, I'm confused.

What most of us, because of our condition, might do is look confused. Oh, well gosh, now we need to clarify something for this person. Instead, what I usually do and what I suggest people do is to say how's your body feeling in this moment? Very often, because I've already calibrated that, the person is going to say something like, well gosh, my body feels peaceful.

Then I say something like, so you're body's feeling peaceful, but mentally you're sort of confused, how do you feel about that? Very often then what happens is the person will start to smile and they'll go well, I guess it's okay. So now what we've done is we've created an actual experience where their body, i.e. their unconscious processing, was ahead of them.

They were feeling comfortable. It was only what we generally call their conscious mind or their dominant hemisphere was unable to track the experience. But then what we can do is we can use that as an opportunity to say by the way, how do you feel about...? Again, using that inductive kind of language, how do you feel about... this experience or that experience?

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So the person goes well gosh, I guess its okay. You know I don't even know what I don't know at this point, but I seem to feel peaceful about it and there's the metaphor. It's like they don't have to know and yet they can still feel peaceful and be resourceful in that unknowing.

**Igor:** So basically what you're doing there is you're retraining, shall we say the whole neurology, that rather uncertainty meaning impending disaster, which is basically taught in school. You don't know the answer; the teacher calls you up, embarrassment. You don't know the answer; the test comes, you fail. You don't know the answer; you hand your homework in, big red marks. That's where I guess a lot of it may come from.

But instead of doing that you've actually retained the whole nervous system that uncertainty, you now start looking for the opportunity, so the state itself of uncertainty is itself neutral. It can be good, it can be bad, it can be whatever you want it to, but if you're looking for the bad it can be uncertainty what?

It can be uncertainty I'm failing at life. I can't feed my family. I'm embarrassed by people and all the rest of it and that's where most people tend to go because of our training over time.

What we're doing now is we're shifting it the other way to say well no, uncertainty can mean opportunity. It can mean loss of all the different constraints that you used to have around you. It can mean all these good things that weren't happening before can begin to happen now because there's space for them now.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** That's where the real power comes. This is where it comes back to the CD set that we talked about in the interview, the idea of thriving through uncertainty. You literally get to have a better, bigger life by embracing uncertainty and all the welcome changes that it brings.

**John:** Exactly. It's like you said, the one thing we can be certain about is that life in itself is uncertain. But, the one thing that we do have a fair amount of control over is what are we paying attention to like I said, and how are we reacting. In other words, what's the emotional state that we generate that we pair up with what we're paying attention to?

So, those are the things that we can change and, as you say, if a person's feeling a state of peace or a state of confidence and now they're looking at an uncertain situation – I almost said the word – it becomes an opportunity.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** They don't even think about oh, this is uncertain. I'd better watch out what I'm doing there. They're like wow this is great look at all these possibilities; there's

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going to be a lot of opportunity here. Whereas, if a person's in a state of fear or something like that then it generates the complete opposite experience.

**Igor:** Now what this kind of remind me of a little bit is going back. I know one of the influences that influenced you was the idea of Zen and the Zen Koans and so on. It reminds me of a story I remember reading, which at the time didn't make sense to me, but I've learned to make a lot more sense of it now, of this Zen master, creating one of the Japanese Zen gardens with the beautifully sculpted trees and the things and whatever.

He spends like 10 years building this thing and every day it's getting closer. People can see it and there's a real joy in people's eyes as they start seeing it take shape. On the day that it's finished, the last little piece of sand is scraped in just the right direction and it's all looking beautiful and so on, the students all come and they look at the garden and go this is amazing it's taken you 10 years and it's a real work of art.

What are you going to start doing tomorrow? Are you just going to sit there and enjoy it? Are you going to start a garden somewhere else? What are you going to do? He turns around and says well, tomorrow I'm going to tear it all down and start again.

It's that idea that as we grow older there's a tendency, I guess it's neurologically engrained with the patterns that are running through our brains, to want more certainty. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't to get to the things you're familiar with. So if we get into a habit, and it's a mental habit, of breaking down too much certainty, to use it when it's useful of course, but then to break it down when it starts getting a bit too constricting.

You've been channeled too much down a particular path and it's like hang on a second I've lost the joy in life or I've lost the juice that I used to have when I was young. It's not that you're growing older and you don't have enough juice left in you, it's just that you're more constrained than you were back then and there's no fun left in it.

**John:** Yes. The Koan for me directs us to thinking about the one proposition that, again, comes right out of quantum mechanics. It's not the first to talk about it obviously, a lot of spiritual systems have in different ways, but the idea or my way of saying it is all we are is change. That's the fulcrum on which this whole idea of well, what do you get out of certainty or what do you get out of uncertainty rests.

So, in other words, if a person typically is saying I want certain things to be a certain way, they want to create the illusion for themselves that things are not changing when they don't want them to be changing.

Yet everything, as you know and I've said lots of times, even if you and I made a date a year from now to have this conversation again, the you and the me that are talking to each other, the subatomic particles that make up the you and



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me, 99.999% of all of those will have been gone and new ones will be there instead, but we will still call ourselves Igor and John and we have lots of ways to forget about the fact that all we are is a process ourselves.

We are constantly changing ourselves. You cannot step into the same place in the river twice because the river keeps moving. So part of what happens, where we run into usually, a lot of suffering in life is our reluctance to want to let go of a particular forum that we really like in order for it to become, hopefully, something that could even be greater.

However, we get attached to the forum, forgetting that everything is subject to change, including us, including our thinking and everything outside of us. So it can never be the same, yet we want it to be that way.

**Igor:** This is basically what happens when people “peak too soon” like the high school athlete that doesn’t become anything, because he’s trying to recreate those glory days rather than finding new and better glory days as he goes on.

**John:** Exactly and they get attached to the forum. I know we’ll probably talk about it at some point, the CD I made ‘Psychotropic Gurus’. The name of that CD is actually called ‘The Third Guna’ and without getting into it too much; those are universal energies and the Third Guna is what I say is the one that sucks the most.

That’s when we go from experiencing life in a certain form and in order for evolution to continue we have to let go of that form in order to expand the being part of us, to expand the possibilities as that cycle continues. I think, as you’re saying, there are all kinds of terms for it— resting on your laurels, in spiritual terms it’s just called attachment.

But, it’s the idea that we over identify with a particular forum so much that it becomes our prisoner instead of our liberator.

**Igor:** This is coming back to something that you hinted at a few times, especially in the interview, where we talked about what’s the one linguistic structure or basic concept, if you like, that everybody runs, you and me included of course, that ends up creating all the suffering we have in our life.

We’re not talking about big Buddhist ideas of karma or whatever it is, although there may be some value in those things too, but just purely on a very simple, shall we say intellectual level, the one little mistake our minds try to make, on which basically all forms of suffering that we could possibly have, all limitations and everything else is based on.

**John:** Yes. Especially related to what we’re at right now is that whole idea of not wanting to let go of that certain forum because we have certain emotional states that are attached to that forum.

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There are a couple different angles we can look at this with, but when I said what's the key linguistic structure that creates suffering in the Western world that creates attachment, is this whole idea of I'll feel blank – you can put in a positive state there – when something outside of me happens.

In other words, I'll feel confident when I get that new job. I'll feel secure when I have a certain amount of money in the bank. I'll feel complete as a person when I have this relationship with my soul mate or something like that.

So what's happened is that we have created, in NLP terms inside of the meta model, is called a Cause Effect and we've got the cause on the wrong side. What we're saying is we're waiting for these external things to happen in order for us to be able to access an emotional state.

Then, what happens is let's say, we set a goal for ourselves, very often what we're after isn't even that thing that we call the goal. I don't know, let's say a person's into running and they want to complete a marathon.

Here's the typical thing that happens in a coaching thing. They say they want to run a marathon, but for some reason they're not getting around to training enough. They're into this pattern that we could call procrastination where it's just not happening.

Whenever you hear a 'should' is also a part of this where a person will say well, I should workout five times a week or I should write this book. Well, if it was such a great idea and it was so perfect for you, you'd probably get around to doing it, so what's in the way of it? Probably, because the person is thinking to themselves I'll feel a certain state or I'll feel confident when I've written that book.

There are a couple problems with that. The first one is that they're delaying their experience of that confidence until they have the book written. Second of all, how many times along the way is the very state that they're delaying by making it contingent upon this outward goal. It's the very state they need to have to begin and maintain the process.

So then they run into these situations where they go well, you know, I sit down at the word processor, I start to try, and type and I just get frustrated. Well frustration doesn't feel like confidence and that's what their end state is that they wanted. So then what happens they go you know what this doesn't feel very good so I think I'll go do something else like call a friend or something.

**Igor:** Then, of course, it totally makes sense that they get sidetracked and they talk about having an inner saboteur and so on, but that's not actually happening. What they're doing is pulling the plug on themselves by saying I can only have this resource that I'm wanting in my life -- because what they're asking for is to feel that way -- and I can only ever have it in situation (X).

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Then they're setting themselves up to a fall, because there's this rigid boundary around when that's allowed to be experienced. It's like not until you've had your dinner. You can't have dessert until you've had dinner.

**John:** Right and that's where it all comes from, stuff like that.

**Igor:** Kids are very creative about finding other ways to get the dessert without having to have the dinner, but as adults we lose that ability because we get rigid again and that's why uncertainty becomes our biggest friend. If you can be uncertain about having that feeling only once you've succeeded with a marathon, writing a book or whatever it is, then you might be able to have it before you've done that, so you might as well enjoy the process of getting it more than actually having it.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** I've noticed a lot of people who excel in their field. I remember one story of a guy who is one of these crazy iron man racers who's basically done every most grueling situation in the world and he started running when he was like 50. I think the reason was his doctor said you need to get yourself in shape or your arteries aren't going to make it.

I remember being fascinated, because he started the whole process by going for a walk and then he just did a little jogging between the walk because it was fun to do. From doing a little jog, doing a little jog, into a couple of sit ups and then he'd do a few more things. I think I saw him at one of these telethon things and he was doing press ups or sit ups for 24 hours straight.

This is a guy that the doctor told a few years before that you better get in shape, your heart won't make it, or your arteries won't make it. But he wasn't trying to be like I'll be so excited when I get on the telethon and I do 24 million sit ups, it was like I'm enjoying this, I wonder what else I can do.

**John:** Exactly and that's the difference. The way to undo the I'll be happy when, or I'll be happy if, paradox and this is a process that I do a lot in coaching with people, is you just accept that first. You just say okay, great. So, you want to achieve this goal. Yes, great. What I want you to do is I want you to go out and I want you to consider how you'd be as a person.

How would you be feeling? How would you be as a person knowing that you actually had accomplished this? The whole idea there is get them in touch with the state, because they can have the state now. They can experience that now. Then it's a matter of bringing them back to now and in effect, saying to the person do you still want to do that? That's the first step.

It's like well okay, now that you're feeling this way and if you will, we've disengaged the state from whatever that external event is. So now we're saying okay, now you have the state, do you still want to do it? Sometimes a

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person will go you know what? I really don't I don't know what I was even thinking. Then the next question would be, so now as you're feeling this way, what do you want to do now? That would be one way to think about it.

The other way to think about it is, you get the person in touch with the state and they're feeling it, so you say what about this goal and they go you know what I want to do it. But, the difference that you're going to hear is you're going to hear a completely different reason why they want to accomplish it.

To put it in NLP terms, it's going to go from what had been and away from thing, coming from deficit, to now it's more like, you know what, I just love this stuff and I want to do more. It's a completely different frame, just like the guy you're talking about with the exercise. He's doing it because he actually enjoys the process of it, so it's easy to be inspired and he just takes the next step to find out what happens.

**Igor:** You just reminded me of something else, which demonstrates to me anyway, the immense power of such a very small shift in the formula.

➤ **Are you familiar with the idea of free runners or free running?**

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** For those of you listening who don't know, free running is basically the stuff where guys start running across rooftops, jump up tall buildings and bounce between the buildings; they do crazy stunts.

If you've seen the first of the new Bond films, Casino Royale, the very first opening scene where they're through the building site and jumping through windows, rolling on things and all the rest of it, that's an example of free running.

I love their philosophy because it's simple it's this... you can never go back you always have to keep going forwards. I saw a documentary on how they got started and it's fascinating.

➤ **Do you know how they got started?**

**John:** No.

**Igor:** It was a bunch of French kids. I think it was in Marseilles. It was like seven or eight friends who would hang out, sometimes they'd bunk off school and then just play around the park, because there's nothing there for kids to do, so they would just be on park benches. You know how kids do, they'll avoid the cracks or they'll jump from one park bench to the next park bench and so on.

They actually showed the place they did this. There's a little fountain with seven benches all around it to sit on and they literally just start off by walking

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on the bench, then they'd just skip over to the next bench and skip over to the next bench when they go to the end, just because they were bored.

That was kind of like fun, so they'd start daring each other like how far could they make that gap. So they'd jump before they'd go to the edge and then they'd look for other things a bit further apart. They'd jump the garage of one of the boy's houses to the garage of the next boy's house because there was a bit more of a gap in between.

That was just for fun because they had nothing to do, right. Then somehow something bit, a bug bit, the exercise element, the physical bit. Each week one kid would come up with some cool new stunt to do and he'd practice it in secret and then he'd show it to the other guys and they'd go wow, how'd he do that? Then they'd all do it. Then the next kid would do something.

It's come to the point where this is such a high art form you see people literally spend eight hours in the gym practicing on gym equipment on these big crash mats, getting things wrong, doing spinning, and flying, turning motions and jumping off stuff, it's crazy what they do.

For me the real interesting part is to realize it's crazy that they started by little kids skipping across a bench and rather than stopping there being bored with it, they enjoyed it so much they thought to themselves what else can I do that will be more fun than what I just did?

**John:** Yes. It's about they're already feeling excited, so its how do they want to express it now, which is so different than I have to do this thing and that's usually what you're going to hear. It's not going to be I want to; it's going to be I have to do this thing in order to feel a certain way.

They just did it from the process they were in. It's like wow I did that, so now let's see where we can go next. And oh, wow, I practiced that move, I wonder if I started to make this adjustment now I can do this other thing. Then what starts to happen is that's how one creates momentum in their life.

I haven't read any interviews with the folks that you're talking about, but I know from other people that are in similar kinds of competitions and I know even in my own life when things have gotten really busy, typically, all that they're doing is just paying attention to what's the next stunt anyway.

Before they start they might think about where they want to end up, but then its where does your awareness have to be? Just on the next step. What's the next stunt? Once you clear that one then you think about the next one. You don't think of the one that you're going to do four stunts from now while you're doing the first one. That usually does not create a good result.

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**Igor:** Some very interesting principles are coming out from this for me now which is, on the one side, it gives a completely different aspect on the idea of certainty versus uncertainty.

Certainty is I'm bored and there's nothing I can do.

Certainty is I can only feel good once I've written this book, run the marathon or had this big achievement award no one else has given me, because it's certain. You write the book, it means you'll feel elated, because maybe it's happened in the past and that's what you're thinking about.

On the flip side now, we have total uncertainty and the payoff is like 10 times larger. You have these kids, they're bored so they're just skipping on the benches and it's kind of fun, so they'll do more fun by skipping even more on the bench and then make even more fun by making it a little bit trickier here or trickier there.

They have no plan. It's not like they're thinking in 10-20 years time I'm going to earn a living by running across rooftops or across some Paul's Cathedral and finding a way of sliding down while still running at full speed. They're not even considering that, but that's the default position they're now up in as a result of just having a lot of fun.

It's the uncertainty, right, rather than saying I can only have fun at the next step if I master this trick, it's more like saying I'm enjoying the process of doing this little stunt. Because once I get it these guys are going to just get so excited and I'll be able to show it to them or whatever it is.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** So you're going from the idea of not just being willing to have uncertainty, you're going to the point where you actually have to have uncertainty to achieve something spectacular, because that's the only way you'll maintain momentum together.

**John:** Exactly and you can create enough certainty, if you will, that becomes sort of a foundation from which you spring and that's the state that's one way to think about it or it's just taking a small enough step and the way I look at it is this.

In the body of knowledge that I've played around with called 'beyond goals', which is what we're talking about right here, the actualization of a goal, as far as I'm concerned, is about as variable as weather forecasting and I mean it in the most absolute literal sense you could ever take it.

I had a friend one time many years ago who was a meteorologist on a local TV station. One night we were just sitting around having dinner and I said to him, I said, so what is it with you guys, you know, it seems like they're always the ones that people take potshots at because they're wrong so often.

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He said if you want to know the truth, we only have a decent amount of confidence and assurance about a forecast once we're inside of 24 hours and that's still on a very big level. If it's a certain kind of climate where it's prone to thunder showers we can't even predict those, even an hour away sometimes.

So he said if you're looking at any of these extended forecasts, even with the stuff that we have right now, you need inside of 24 hours to know what's going on.

So now let's apply the same idea to goals, okay, let's create a 10-year goal for ourselves. Boy, oh boy and then what we're going to do is we're going to do all kinds of processes to pump up that goal, to make it seem real, to do all the things that a lot of goal-setting things teach us to do and yet, what are we doing?

Number one, first of all, we're creating the goal usually because, as I was saying before, we want to feel a certain way, but let's even assume that we feel pretty good about it. Well at best, all we can ever be doing is making that projection from what we know right now.

So there's 10 years of information and change, of which we cannot know and we are now going to say but let's just forget about all that. Let's just pretend that I could know it all and 10 years from now this is how I want things to be. I'm not even saying that people can't accomplish things that way sometimes, but what I am saying is very often they're swimming up stream and if you look at the totality of their life, they're not particularly happy.

Why? Because the further away that thing is the more uncertainty and variability there is. That's the nature of chaotic systems like weather and non-linear systems like human consciousness. So what happens is that the further away it is the person has to— a couple things—

1. One, it's so far away, how are they going to continue to stay motivated for this thing that's 10 years hence as each day goes on?
2. Two, at the same time, it was created from a consciousness that is now no longer valid for them because they've probably changed since then.

What's all the potential information that they could be getting from their field? From somebody that they might meet that they would never know or just happenstance kinds of things that can happen where they're going to get information, they're going to get inspiration.

If they're going to actually get that exact forum of that goal, the closer they get to it the more the more they have to limit the field of possibilities and potential help to end up with that exact forum that they thought 10 years ago was the exact solution that they needed.

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So, this is where they start to grind it out, you know where they start to have to grind it out and go I'm going to get this thing and now they might be totally unhappy by the time they get it, because they could have maybe gotten it much faster if they would have let go of the forum a little bit or if they would have used some of things that they could have been learning along the way and maybe updated what they thought that form ought to be.



# Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

## Seminar 1 – Part 2

**Igor:** I can tell you tested this because first of all, apart from the fact that I'm a very different person I am today than 10 years ago and I'll think you'll agree to this because you met me almost 10 years ago.

That whole thing aside, my whole abilities have totally transformed in a way that I never would be able to even guess at. Some of the biggest and most positive shifts, changes, and things that have happened in my life were really as a result of random coincidence; just a lucky thing here that I happened to recognize and go oh, that will help me along, and take that.

I could not honestly – there is no way – sometimes if I kind of lose sight of how – I kind of enjoy my life now and I like it, I'm very grateful for it, but sometimes I scare myself by looking at where I could have been had I followed the kind of linear path, that kind of planning, because all the coincidences that really made my life what it is now, there's no way I could have planned for it.

Had I stuck with my plans, there's no way I would have had any of the opportunities or even taking opportunities that came my way. So it's more a question of saying well this is the direction I want, these are the kind of things I want more of in my life, and when something presents to you to goes hey, here's a possibility, the very least you can do is go let's check it out.

If it comes to nothing, I can always go back to the old path and if it becomes something, well, it could save me a huge amount of time and in my experience that's exactly what happens. There's a huge amount of time that's cut out.

**John:** Yes, it's the exact same thing for me. I had a big life transition, was with the same person for about 25 years who I was in business with, Julie, and married to, basically sort of grew up together. Everything was so darn certain that as far as I'm concerned that was the biggest problem.

While I was still doing things that were exciting to me, I was very much at a point in my life for probably the last five years or so where I was just thinking, is this it? I couldn't say that I was unhappy, but what I had no idea was how much happier I could become.

What did it take? Well basically feeling like the rug got ripped out from underneath me, became the most liberating period of my life that I'm continuing to still experience all of the momentum that came out of that. I would have never planned it.

In fact, I could have even said at the time it was my greatest fear that all that stuff would change. I would end up getting divorced. I would end up basically dissolving a company, a partnership like that, all those kinds of things. I never would have guessed that that would be the whole; at least, I hope I have more

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than just a second wind, but in all respects the second wind of my life. It's like my whole life has transformed.

I could have never planned it. It was only when I got to that point and I was faced with all of these decisions which were completely overwhelming because there were so many entanglements and things, real practical things that we had to work out because we had been together for so long.

There were so many financial things, business things, joint ownership of things, along with just all the relationship aspects of growing up with somebody and all of that kind of stuff. It was pretty overwhelming at the beginning and that's where it really clicked in, Igor.

There was a point where I remember thinking to myself I learned this thing called Ericksonian Hypnosis and the takeaway I got from that was that I have an overall direction of where I want to go, but I don't know exactly how I'm going to get there with a client, and what am I going to do?

I'm going to throw one suggestion out there and I'm going to find out what I get back. Then, once I know what that is, then I will take the next step.

I learned in that process that the fear, the anxiety and the overwhelm that I was feeling at certain times then, was a function of me being too far out in the future. Even though I might think that I can think pretty well, there's no way I could figure out all the eventualities of things that were going to happen or not going to happen the further and further I got away from now.

It really taught me to reel it back in.

**Igor:** Just to point out to people, the idea of trying to predict the future is another way of saying you're trying to find more certainty by being able to anticipate what's going to come your way, whereas, the solution for you was to actually let go of that and find more uncertainty, to find the kind of uncertainty that was actually pleasant rather than the fear of all the things that are going around at the time.

**John:** It was so ironic because the feeling I had was and I was riding so much on an unconscious kind of thing. The day that we went to the lawyer to sign the papers to begin the divorce I first went to see a therapist.

I then signed the papers, and for the first time in my life I flew an airplane right after that, all in one afternoon.

**Igor:** That's quite an afternoon.

**John:** That's what my therapist said at the time. It was really funny. I started to realize, how would I be if all of this worked out free and peaceful. So, I started to realize this is the field that you're going to be planting all your seeds in not anxiety, not any other thing, but it's a field of peace and freedom.

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I learned that if I plant a seed inside of that state, whatever I get, I might not know what the form is, but I know it's going to be a manifestation or an outgrowth of that.

On the other hand, if we have the field of fear, we can put whatever seed we want in it, but it's going to be just another derivative of that fear. It might be even more sophisticated than what we had before, but it's still going to be growing in that field.

I just got the idea, it's like okay, I make my plans for freedom and peace then I decide what's the smallest next step? I only go deductive long enough to find out what that step is and once I make it, then I look around and I go I opened up the field again, and I go okay, what do I know now that I didn't know a minute ago or whatever it might be.

I realized that sometimes the smallest next step, some people might go oh, that's what you're going to do later today or that's what you going to do tomorrow.

Well, sometimes back in that era I was thinking about what I was going to do two hours from then and I still felt anxious because I realized there was still ... I was still too far out for myself at that point and I needed to go, okay, what's right in front of my nose?

How did I know I was taking the smallest next step in the right way? I knew it because I continued to feel peaceful and free as I went through the process rather than shifting into some other emotion that I didn't want.

That was my indication, okay; you just left your end state there, John. You got too far ahead of yourself. Let's reel it back in here and take a look at what the smallest next step is.

**Igor:** Might I just pause you there again because I think you've just given away a really big key as far as I'm concerned, key secret to life in general let alone being a better hypnotist.

I would call that the life compass, which is you're using your inner sense, how you feel right now, to navigate what your next step will be, and sometimes you think it's going to be a particular direction and doing it somehow feels all wrong.

That's usually because your unconscious mind has a bigger pattern and gets a sense of where you're going with it, and by going hang on a second, this isn't right, how do I fix it, and you just move or step to the left or step to the right, suddenly everything starts unfolding and it starts coming out really well.

**John:** That's it.

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**Igor:** Rather than thinking look, I've been doing self-improvement for 25 or 30 years, whatever, I should know better than this and shouldn't be having fear anymore or anything like that. It's actually going hang on a second this is pretty cool.

I get to be warned about a potential mistake I could be making a long, long time before actually making, like entrenching it, and having to live it for 10 years and suddenly thinking is there any other choice?

**John:** Exactly, that's it.

**Igor:** It seems like there is a real kind of key to dealing with change or uncertainty as we're now calling it in this sense and I know for a lot of people that I've met; I've met a lot of people just in my travels.

The ones that have come the farthest in life, typically, not all by most of them have some major crisis which shook everything up and basically pulled down all the walls of certainty, all the forms they had, forced them to start again.

Only this time, of course, with all the wisdom that they have from life experiences they get to build a much nicer house and hopefully be prepared to go through it again the next time it happens so that they an even better one should they live long enough to be able to have that other crisis.

There are other ways to do this as well, isn't there?

**John:** Well, let's hope so! Yes. I sort of feel like what happened for me is I guess the way I like to put it is I was going along and I was sort of cruising and I was asking myself is this it? It's not so bad, but it was feeling like okay, I'm 40 years old I guess I sort of peaked out and now there's just sort of this slow decline kind of thing.

It was like literally God, the Universe whatever, just dropped the giant piano on my head and said uh, wake up dude. I think that's what happens if you get too attached to that over a period of time. Obviously, there's always going to be things outside of our control but I think I could have seen the train coming down the track a little sooner, let's say.

One of the things that I think goes to your question is it's really about learning to build a certain amount of uncertainty in a conscious way into your life and getting comfortable with realizing if you show up to the present, you show up to now and you're awake, everything that you have now you can bring to bear on whatever the next decision or the best decision point or the next step it is that you're going to take and to realize that that's where you're going to get most of your inspiration.

It's like you said in your life, that there are going to be these coincidences that you can't predict, but the thing is if you're staying in now, you're not going to overlook those things as much. If you're looking out into the future and sort of

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fixing on this target that you think is completely critical to your life, you're missing these things that could be right in front of your nose because your attention is just not there.

For me, it's the idea of really building in a certain amount of uncertainty. To give you an example, in my life I guess now about two years ago, I had sort of come out of the other end of the transition that I was referring to earlier there. I met an angel in my life named Kirsten who actually helped me a lot with the whole Beyond Goals concept, because she was living her life that way.

She used to sell very high end, over a million dollar software to large companies. I'll never forget, I was talking to her one day and I said God, if you've got a client and this could be ... it might take nine months to a year and a half to sell one of these products because it was a big product, I said how do you actually deal with that?

She said I just take the smallest next step. I don't get too far ahead of myself and I realized that this person has a really high tolerance for ambiguity certainly in terms of how she lives her life. We got together and we've generated lots of stuff and just have a great life, a happy, loving life together, and it was funny, about two years ago I'm thinking I wonder, we're starting to get into sort of a really nice rhythm here but I know; I've been here.

You get into this nice rhythm, you can start to get seduced a little and realize the whole key to life is how you deal with the transitions. It's like when the rhythm changes.

I thought well, maybe we need to start to introduce some bigger stuff. We purposely decided, for lots of different reasons, but we decided to get a second place because we scaled down our living situation. We were going to get another place in a different part of the country, in Phoenix.

I knew that would shake it up because we liked both places. At any particular point in time, we were never anywhere longer than roughly six weeks before we would go somewhere else; either somewhere else in the world, from Atlanta to Phoenix or something.

It really did shake things up and it caused me to have to reevaluate what was important to me, but these were all choices coming out of a conscious purposeful desire to want to introduce some uncertainty; i.e., live in two places instead of one.

It's so weird, Igor, because the people around us would go, oh, well, you probably like this place better than the other, don't you? You're probably just going to end up in this one place, aren't you? It was like, no! I like them both. Yes, but they're so different. That's the idea – they're so different!

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There are things here in Atlanta that I just absolutely love that aren't really there, and it's not just the physical things, it's just an atmosphere, it's an energy that are different than in Phoenix.

When I'm in Phoenix I feel the same way, so no matter where I am I really enjoy it but at the same time it's that idea of let's shake things up a little bit here so that we keep having some fresh energy that's coming into our life rather than getting too into the two old shoes kind of way of living.

**Igor:** That takes us right back to the point we started this whole seminar with, which is you're doing physically with your whole life what you've been recommending to people to do in order to reach hypnosis mastery, which is getting out of the field that you're used to.

In other words, you're going somewhere else for inspiration to bring back, so your time in Phoenix makes you enjoy the time in Atlanta more and vice versa, right?

**John:** Exactly. I mean, I think it's fair to say I think you were living that path very well yourself right now with having let go of a lot, any one geographic area necessarily that you spend a lot of time in. What's your life like now that you're doing that?

**Igor:** It's exciting. It's very liberating. One thing I've noticed also because I've been doing this for about two years now, being kind of nomadic, that's also a pattern of I find myself falling into and as soon it's getting a bit constraining, like oh, I've got to be somewhere else next month or I've got to try something else next month.

Now I'm starting to think, hang on a second; maybe I should put a root down in some place because otherwise I'm just getting too drifting in the wind. It becomes just as constraining, believe it or not, than constantly moving around or then just being locked in one particular place.

**John:** I completely relate. I had the same experience when we were in Phoenix actually this past spring, was the first time in two years that we hadn't been in a different place every six weeks for a number of different reasons. Part of it was planned, but part of it was just spontaneous.

We ended up staying there for most of the spring and I said to Kirsten, my God, I haven't had this much time to really think and reflect, because we were often going from one place, Brazil, and then come home, and then go to Canada and come home, and then go to say Sweden and then come home, just all over the place.

That was so good for me because it taught me how to keep pace with change when there are a lot of things happening. Then I realized the same thing that

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you're saying. It was like, now wait a minute, don't get addicted to that either. Don't get too attached to that.

Then, what happened was when we sort of settled down, slowed down, I started to realize I have a whole bunch, I have a whole another synthesis that is happening in terms of what's important to me again in my life that I hadn't really thought of before by again switching that pattern up.

Again, it goes right back to that certainty thing. One of my favorite quotes is Jaadu Krishnamurthy, an Indian sage wrote lots of books and was a mentor to David Bohm, a quantum physicist who wrote a lot about consciousness.

I'm paraphrasing this – he said something like the truth is not static. It is not an idea to be achieved. The basic idea is, even what we call truth with a capital - T- for ourselves is constantly changing because all we are is change. At any given point in time, what has worked for you may not work again in quite the same way because everything continues to change?

I think that again goes back to that idea of being willing to let go of the form as you go and realize that if you're a surfer and you're trying to catch a wave, you're never going to be able to catch that one wave that was the perfect wave ever again, but what you can do is you can match similar conditions and then find out what happens.

The conditions are always going to be a function of what is happening now. You can't recreate that old wave that happened.

**Igor:** I think that's really important for people to get because you can fall and it's so easy to do because it's still happening to me now, let's face it.

**John:** Oh, me too.

**Igor:** You can fall into this trap where you get used to a way of being and to most people's eyes it looks like totally fresh and revolutionary and whatever it is, but you just put your finger on the button there which is if you get attached to it, if you say this is the way to do it, at that point an alarm bell should be ringing.

Especially for me the alarm bell goes when someone recommends I should try something else or do something else, and inside I feel sort of life a slight uneasiness, I kind of like the way my life is right now.

There's a version of me which just says I don't need it, but there's a version that I can kind of feel which is almost like an inattention, which basically tells me I've just gotten to the point where I'm starting to hold on, where I'm getting a bit too rigid on things, so maybe I should do this just out of principle. Sometimes, it doesn't work out.

Sometimes I could take it or leave it but other times when that happens there's this real, I go through like a moment of, how shall I put it, some kind of intensity.

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It's uncomfortable, I don't like it, and I have to really pull myself together. It pops and the things that come out of it are like this is the best ever. I always have to do this and I always remember to do this. Of course, now you can hardly hear it. It's already happening again. That's the next layer.

That's part of the lesson for me, and in particular with hypnosis it's so easy to do when you work with a client, you'll do what you're familiar with. It's like I'll do this because I know how to do it. It's fine to do what you're familiar with, but you get to the point where you're saying okay, I've done the bits I'm familiar with, I've set a good foundation here, now I'm going to do something that's going to be a little bit scary for me.

For me, that was started to use mind-bending language, what you would call Beyond Words or now directionalized ambiguities. That was a big deal for me at the time because the way of describing it and using it, I know we've evolved since then in terms of much more elegant ways of teaching it.

Most of that discovery, which I'm very grateful to you for, it's such a revolutionary way of thinking that it blew my mind trying to do it. Just the act of trying to do sometimes even inelegantly, collapsing back to what I knew and then trying again; there's something that I've heard you say and this is true in neuro science, the fact that you're trying counts.

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** There's something where there's a disservice being done to us as hypnotherapists. A lot of hypnotherapists say do or don't do. There is no try. It's a very Yoda sort of thing.

Linguistically, they are correct. Trying implies failure. They're absolutely correct with that, but we can get too attached to that idea and say basically, well, if I'm not going to do it I may as well not bother at all because there's no trying.

Well, that's not true. Try and fail and then retreat and lick your wounds and then try it again, because that act of trying in the right mindset in terms of I'm trying it because I'm not comfortable with it, that – if there is only one thing I would recommend people do to really reach the level of mastery, that's that biggest thing in life that's been ... my cousin sums it up as the rule that if you are afraid of it, do it.

**John:** I think another way of saying what you're saying is the way I reframe the trying thing is effort counts. If you're putting legitimate effort into something, even if you're not getting entirely the results that you want, as you're hinting modern neuroscience, we can take pictures of people's brains while they are actively involved in certain tasks now which are going to completely revolutionize our field.



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We're just scratching the surface. It's going to completely revolutionize hypnosis and really therapy in general because we're going to actually be able to see what works and what doesn't.

The one thing that has been proven pretty much across the board with some of the leading people right now is that if you have a particular habit that you're attempting to break, let's say, that part of your brain, the nerves that are involved in that habit are no different, really, than a muscle in your body that you have built up over time and gotten it stronger than other muscles around it.

We used to think that all that it did was created more associations and start to tie in other parts of our brain, but now what it's actually demonstrating is that if you do the same thing over and over and over again, the neurons themselves actually get thicker, the axon. It's thicker. The cell body gets larger. It develops more dendrites, which are like the little branches that reach out to other neural networks.

The idea there is that when you're wanting to do something new, whether it's just a new technique when you're working with a client, or maybe it's a habit that you have that you really want to change, in the beginning that part where if you feel like you're grinding a little bit but you're still putting effort into it, that's because you were literally starting to strengthen other nerves in your other neural networks in your brain that aren't as muscular, if you will, as the old one.

It's going to feel a little weird at first but that's the only way that we can do it. If we continue to do that, and it takes roughly anywhere from six weeks to six months to fully activate if we had an old habit to fully activate a new neural network so that the other one, the old one, isn't being used at all.

We can use techniques that get them working together in the beginning; it's not like you have to wait six weeks for this change to occur. With what we know we can attach a resource to the problem neural network and chain the person out of it.

In the long run, what's going to happen is that effort is literally just like going the gym and putting the effort in long enough, you will see results. To me, that's one of the most reassuring things that neuroscience has shown us, that there is so much more that is going on below the surface if we're willing to put the effort in.

**Igor:** This reminds me of something else which I think is a principle of Erickson's which I really liken it to ... it took me many years to figure out what really was happening here.

It seems counterintuitive when you come first across it, and that is, what is the smallest change you can make in someone which is almost unnoticeable by the person themselves, which over a period of time will snowball into this huge life change overall.

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**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** Something you used to do over and over and over again. It's exactly what you're saying right now which is, you're now not trying to just push the whole river to the left at once; all we're doing is we're saying okay, let's cut a little rut, a little channel in this side here and let the water start trickling in, and over time the water will do the effort.

The fact that you're living your life with this little thing going down this stream as well is going to carve a new channel and eventually there's going to be enough energy in it that you can move the whole river if you decided to do that.

**John:** Exactly. That really is the key piece. I remember when I was really into the idea of the smallest next step in my life, I was reading the book, and it was ... I can't remember what it was now, but one of the chapters was on the life of Bruce Lee, the famous martial artist.

They were interviewing him and I know you do martial arts, Igor, I don't know, he was some like tenth degree black belt in one or two different forms, and they were asking him what it is really at this point, what it is that you're really learning when you say that you're moving to the degree.

He said, well, for example the thing that I've learned that is the highest teaching that I have gotten up to this point is that potentially the smallest point, the smallest move I can make can create the biggest shift in the opponent.

What he was really looking for was what's the smallest leverage point that if he does that will completely have a massive effect in terms of shifting of the legs in a potential fight or something like that's going.

To me, I looked at it and it was very similar to weather forecasting in chaotic systems. Very early on when the first models were being developed – I love this story because it's just life – here's this little scientist and he's trying to figure out how to create a weather model to predict the weather and I think they were just using, this is back in the fifties, they were using I think three things; temperature, wind speed, and maybe humidity or something like that, or pressure.

Because the computers weren't what they are today, he had these really long calculations, had like maybe seven, eight, nine points to the right of a decimal point, so you're dealing with really small things. He thought let's just round things off here. We'll just round them off to the hundredths, so two decimal points.

Guess what happened? With a 24-hour period, that little change, because what was happening was in that model it would take whatever that round-off that he made, whatever that shift was, was getting fed forward to the next calculation that the computer was making for the next couple minutes.

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Then what was happening was that little shift or that little discrepancy was getting fed forward to the next one, and these things start to compound themselves to the point where they were getting weather forecasts that all they had to do was look out the window and they could see they were wrong, because they were completely 180 degrees off-base.

To me, that's the way we work as people. Essentially, it's all through iteration and recursion. If you get too far ahead of yourself, what's going to happen is that you're going to be way, way, way off course.

It's really going for, what's that smallest little leverage point, leveraging that, stacking that on a success? Then taking the next smallest step, stacking that on, and now you have that whole idea of iteration or what was a discrepancy in weather forecasting.

Now you have that working for you because now you have the added affect of what you've just learned, what you've just achieved or what you're just feeling and you're adding that into the next piece.

I think you're right. I think Erickson had a feel for that. He had a way to really look at what's the smallest thing that I can do with this person that's just going to snowball into this massive change over a course of six years that a person looks back and they say my God, I felt differently right after I saw the guy, but I never realized that this would create a whole revolution in my life.

**Igor:** This gives us a tremendous opportunity when we're thinking about our work as hypnotists, either because if in our own lives we feel uncertain at some point, the fact that we've got uncertainty really means that there's no program in our minds yet on how respond and how to act.

You could react any way at all and you can create as you said a little iterative equation where you make a small, tiny adjustment in your personality towards the kind of person you want to be rather than the kind of person that you've been up to this point, and because there's so much uncertainty that means there is no real program running in the background. There is nothing that's trying to force a river down one track over the other.

Now you have the chance to be someone different. Not necessarily in a wild sort of way. If you want to be more, shall we say, outgoing, and you've got this uncertain thing going on, maybe you've been laid off work, where you're talking out just a little bit more purely because you now have the opportunity. It's nothing massive, but over time it becomes that.

The same could be said, I guess, of our work, which is you have a client. You have no idea what to do with them. It happens to everyone. It happens to me quite regularly. You sit there and as they give you some problem you go oh man, this is tough – how do I deal with this thing?

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Then again, you're right in the same position it's uncertainty, which means you can do anything with them. You can do those very inductions; those very processes that you never even thought of doing with someone else will all fit perfectly because they don't fit in the stuff you know how to do.

So, you may as well start with the things you don't know how to do, the situations that you don't know how to deal with and putting it in an appropriate context. If you're seeing your first client and suddenly you come up with an abuse case, you probably want to refer that one on at that point.

But, we're talking about other things where you have weird phobias or whatever it is, you go hey, I don't know how to deal with this so I'll just make something up or I'll do something that I read in a book or I'll try this thing out.

Provided you watch for what happens when you do that first piece, you can decide to continue with that approach or totally change it and go a totally different direction.

**John:** Yes. To me, what happens is if you're willing to step into that belief that all we are is change and we all are is changing, and then what's happening is really when you're sitting with a client, they're changing.

They may not think they are because they might have loss of different anchors in their everyday life that keeping anchoring them into old associations that they have of themselves.

So, they don't even recognize that they're changing from moment to moment, maybe when they are, if there were some observers there they would say oh well, that person clearly looks different than they do now. It's just in terms of before they were frowning and now they're smiling or something.

To me, part of ... literally the smallest next step inside of doing therapy with people is really realizing if all they are is change then again it's a lot like trance in the sense that it's not about inducing, it's about catching it.

If all they are is change, it's a matter of catching them when they change in a way that's sufficient enough that you think that if you can just capture that long enough, anchor that if you want to use that term, long enough, and then be able to have them consider what the problem was while they are in this new state, you're done. Then it's a matter of just conditioning it and so forth.

For me, that's the key element is realizing if all we did, and I know you know this, we've done these kinds of exercises, if all you do is you try to sit with a person and say what are you seeing now? What are you hearing now?

Each moment potentially something could have shifted. Then, if not only are we ... we're not just saying what's happening now, then if we start shifting their attention, this is this directionalized ambiguity again, instead of just saying what's happening now, if we say what are you seeing now, and then we wait a

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minute – what are you feeling now, what happens is, is we're getting them to if you will shine their spotlight in a different area of reality as each now passes.

It's just a matter of time until you're going to find something there that looks robust enough, powerful enough that you can use as a potential building block with that client.

**Igor:** It reminds me of a piece of work I did in one the seminars with a cat phobia where exactly this was the thing. It seems like the smallest piece actually ends up being the straw that breaks that camel's back.

We did a couple of rounds of more crazy language patterns just because it was part of the demonstration. I remember at one point he turned around, he had a memory of a cat that followed him home, and he would freak out because it was a cat.

He was talking about how he is at the door, he's trying to open this door and there's this cat down there. His expression was like this can't be working. I didn't know why I said it, but at the time I just said well how do you feel as you look at that cat?

At that point he just burst out laughing and he says I can't believe this, I feel fine. That was the point where everything just turned.

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** It was almost like he hadn't even realized that he could be okay now, but at that point, it's when he actually had his attention brought actually to the experience that it turned around.

I'll admit quite frankly that surprised me because all I was looking for was a feeling that I could actually use to do more mind-bending language stuff around, but it turned out that that was the mind-bending language that he needed to have in the first place.

So, we're basically collecting happy accidents in life.

**John:** Exactly. If we connect all the dots, if all you are is change, then the question whether you are or you're not is a moot point. Then it's just a matter of, even if people say, well so-and-so can't change what they are really saying is my filters aren't letting me see or experience it; that could be one possibility. Or, that person is not changing in the way I would like them to.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** For me, if all we are is change, then really what guides all our experience, what creates the quality of the experience that we have has to do with what are we paying attention to as we are this process going through life. As we are living, what are we paying attention to?

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A lot of times it's just a matter of we have developed habitual ways of paying attention to things that aren't working for us and what you did with that guy was you shifted his attention to essentially a place that he never paired up with that moment in the now, all at once. It topped it.

I think a lot of times it really can be that straightforward, because most of these patterns – they are by their nature patterns – and what's happened is that from an NLP point of view very often, a person continues to look in a place that is not working.

I'll give you a funny example. A friend of ours, you've met her, Patti, often has said there are these stores here in the United States called Home Depot; it's this giant home improvement store. They are massive. It's all for home improvement, so you can buy plumbing, you can buy wood, you can buy tools, anything that you need basically to build a home is at Home Depot.

They are known; they have this huge reputation for being extremely customer-friendly. They will do anything they can to help you out, find things, whatever.

She said if you go to Home Depot, knowing all of that and what you want is a carton of milk, it doesn't matter how big Home Depot and how helpful the people are, you're not going to find a carton of milk that you can buy at Home Depot.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** You're literally just looking in the wrong place. I think a lot of times that's what has happened is we've developed conditioned responses to put our attention in certain places, and sometimes it's just as simple as going you know what, you're not going to find the milk there, go to the grocery store, it will be really easy. You won't even have to ask anybody, probably.

I think that that metaphor maps across really well into therapy.

**Igor:** I think so. It reminds me of one of the final points that we're going to be looking at tonight. Now, coming back to the basic theme of what today was all about, which is you go outside the field that you're in, you go outside of hypnosis to improve hypnosis because by doing so, each different field.

For example, I know that music has been a big inspiration in your life, John, and by looking at music, which will emphasize elements of your experience that we don't tend to emphasize in hypnosis. Just by the sheer fact that you're in this other field, you're being sensitized. You pay attention to something that normally we wouldn't be paying attention to as a hypnotist.

By doing so, you gather information that you otherwise wouldn't have. You've become sensitized in this way, so when you come back to hypnosis, being sensitized to these other elements of your experience and normally would be out of your experience, shall we say, suddenly you start seeing things, hearing

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things, feeling things, noticing things that weren't there before, and your eyes literally open and you go wow, look at all this stuff I can play with now.

**John:** Exactly. I think that is the key element. We talked a little bit about this during the interview. It doesn't have to be music that's just something that has interested me.

If you go back to that in-state energy question, how would I feel now if I was living my life the way I want? How would I be feeling? Getting yourself in touch with that and then going what's interesting to me. What would I like to explore? What would I like to develop?

The fact of the matter is everything is a metaphor for everything else if you want to live your life that way. The key thing is to not be too quick when you're developing a new metaphor. You want to apply it back over to something that's old.

Give yourself a chance to develop through let's say an interest, to start to really develop some understanding in a different metaphor and then there's a point then where when you start to look at let's say hypnosis through a different lens; that's when you really start to get those ah-ha's and those enlightening experiences like that.

For me, the key thing is being in that state where you're thinking of things that would interest you, you're curious, you naturally want to learn something and you go well, you know, I don't really know.

I used to do this one. I don't know if I really have time to really involve myself in this because I should be doing these things that may be more work-related or something.

It's taken me a long time and I still don't have it right all the time, just like any of the stuff it's not right all the time, but I am getting better at going now wait a minute, how do I know that, and if it's something that I truly enjoy and is enriching my life, frankly who cares if it doesn't map across into my work; who cares?

What I have found is that inevitably it always does, because I'm a whole person. It's pretty hard to have an experience that is a valuable experience in one context and not have it bleed over or stream over into another experience, if you're willing to let that happen.

To me, that is the key element of all this stuff. The co-developers of NLP didn't start with a field called NLP. Erickson didn't start with Ericksonian hypnotherapy. Einstein didn't start with Einstein relativity. All these people started with that box. They went outside the box and later on people started to give names.

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**Igor:** Let's just take this, just to kind of sum this whole thing up because we've been talking a lot about uncertainty and getting rid of structure and just paying attention to the very next thing, and I for one have found it a very fascinating journey; hopefully everyone that is listening has also.

Just to inject a little bit of certainty in this uncertain debate, can we take the example of music in your life – I know music has been a big inspiration, and just give us a little kind of an insight of how music and using that as a metaphor can help to improve your hypnotic work.

I know that's something that we'll be exploring more fully in the next session, but this is like a little taste of this stuff in action; how music can give us more uncertainty or insights that otherwise might not be there.

The thing I have in my mind is to demonstrate to someone how you can take a field which on the surface may look totally unrelated to hypnosis and going through a little journey with it, some of you realize that there is a lot of value in it which they didn't recognize at first. Does that make sense to you?

**John:** Sure, sure. There are many, many levels and I guess we can get into lots of them in the next session, but just a simple thing. Just the idea, for example, of in music, particularly if there is music and it has lyrics, the role that ambiguity has in that there is hypnosis that's going on all the time, hypnotic language patterns inside of music.

One of my favorite stories is a song called 'Every Breath You Take' by The Police, which was a huge hit. I was reading an interview in Rolling Stone with Sting who was the writer of the song, and he said it's the weirdest experience because he said I had people come up to me and part of what happens in that song is it has a very pleading, reassuring, comforting melody.

What I mean by that is it resolves very easily, and I think I'll talk about that next time about one of the things I learned is called tension and release in jazz; how far can you get away from the home chord before it starts to create so much tension that every fiber in your being wants it resolve and go back to the home chord and everybody goes, oh, I feel so much better now.

'Every Breath You Take' is one of the ones where you never leave the home chord very far. It's very pretty to the ear; most people say a very pretty song.

As Sting was relating in the interview, people would come up to him and say oh, we just got married and when my wife and I had our first dance, we danced to that song. Other people would say that was our song when first met. Now we play it all the time and it's just such a wonderful association for us.

For many years, he never told anybody what the song was about, but it's "Every breath you take, I'll be watching you ... every claim you stake, I'll be watching you", things like that. Basically, I'll be watching you every step you take.



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He said that was actually the most paranoid that he had ever written. The lyrics themselves were when he was at the end of a relationship, I think his first marriage, and he knew that the person that he had been with was I think having an affair with somebody else.

What he was saying to the person in the song is I'm going to be watching everything you do. It was an angry, vindictive, paranoid kind of song that he actually wrote.

But because, number one, the melody, the context made it so pleasing that people were taking a completely different angle on the whole thing. To me, it was the role the musical context was totally pleasing and just utterly pleasant and delightful. The words were totally paranoid.

Most people never picked up on that at all. Then, of course, until he actually spilled the beans, the lyrics allowed themselves, the ambiguity of the lyrics made it possible for people to fill in whatever they wanted which is why lots and lots of songwriters never really want to tell you what the punch line is to the song or exactly what it's about.

They know in some respects that's could change the popularity of the song because a person could be listening to the song and thinking oh, it's about this, it's such a great thing, it's so positive or whatever. Then they find out about this terrible breakup in this relationship and this guy is vindictive, angry, and paranoid.

To me, that's a great lesson in context first of all and how the context can include. You can put certain things inside of a context and they just go right by.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** To me, it's a great example of how hypnosis works.

**Igor:** It just reminds me of the Ericksonian process like telling lots of stories, but now there's another nuance to it which is the reason the unconscious takes certain meanings out of those stories is because Erickson say other context with its tonality, his voice, and so on.

By telling all these stories he's actually telling them partly and indirectly how to resolve those stories, what to make of those stories.

**John:** Yes. It's all in the setup and again remember a way of thinking about that is what is everything else that the client is not paying attention to but is going to have an influence on how they process what they are paying attention to.

To me, that's a real chief piece of really once you start to get some of your chops down and you get some of the basic things, that's really one of the higher levels that you're really working with people is that what are the contexts

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that I am creating here so that I could say virtually anything and actually have it work even better.

When you were mentioning starting off with doing some language patterning that you maybe hadn't done before and I was reflecting back on when I first started doing that, I was sort of considered a mainstream psychotherapist at that time and this was back in the late eighties, early nineties, and there was nobody in the place where I lived that was doing anything that really was like this.

I'm thinking these people could just think I'm completely bozo. What are they going to be thinking? What if I just fall flat on my face?

I realized that a lot of times it's all in the setup. This was very straightforward but literally what I would say to people was hey, I'm going to ask you a few questions here that may even sound a bit unordinary or out of the ordinary, or might even seem sort of bizarre to you.

Here's the way I look at it: If I ask you the same kinds of questions that everybody's been asking you or that you've been asking yourself, you're going to probably get the same answers here, so would it be okay if I asked you some maybe even sort of bizarre questions so that you get the outcome that you want?

Inevitably what would happen is I would do a completely clumsy in delivery, not very elegant, that kind of thing, and if I set it up by saying to the person here's bizarre question number one. I would then deliver the question. It would be a clumsy and awkward.

Sometimes I would get the desired result and sometimes I wouldn't, but very often the client's first response back to me would be that doesn't seem bizarre at all.

What I realized was, if I was willing to set a context that gave me the permission, I was really doing this as much for me as the client that gave me the permission to do basically something new that was out of the ordinary, all of a sudden then it took all the sting out of it for both of us.

That's a very simple example, not nearly as complex as what we'll get into with the music, but it was still the idea of okay, if I'm loading something new, what's the context I can create with the person that creates essentially the atmosphere that we both want to have so that I have permission to play.

I can do some different things, explore, and so forth, and at the same time they can be assured that we're still working toward their outcome, and getting that agreement up front is a really simple way of creating context.

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**Igor:** Well, all I can say right now, John, is I very much we had more time because I'm loving the way the conversation is going in so many directions.

**John:** I'm sorry I'm laughing.

**Igor:** As all good things must, this is coming to a slight end here. I will pause it.

Let me just say that in the next session, please pay attention because we're going to take all the principles that we've been talking about – the idea of uncertainty, the idea of the power of now, the idea of setting outside of the field in order to learn more about your own field – in this case hypnosis – then you had before, and mix them all together in a very practical set of insights, tools, and things to do, so that's kind of what you've got prepared for us in the next sort of interview/session type thing, isn't that right?

**John:** That's correct, that's what we'll do.

**Igor:** The quick heads up is we're going to be using music as the example.

Of course, music is not the only thing you can use; you can use anything that exists in life and any body of knowledge that we've got, but we're just going to use music as an example of, here are some ways that you can approach things to learn more about uncertainty, to deal with it better in yourself, to learn more about being a great hypnotist and some other insights that you can have in terms of altered states of being and personal change and so on.

So, I'm very excited to do that. The key thing to keep in the back of your mind as you're listening to that session is part from the practical little tricks and gimmicks you pull out, this is an example of everything we've been talking about, and the key themes are thriving through uncertainty, getting to the point where uncertainty becomes a bonus, a positive thing in our life rather than a negative thing.

The idea of using the present moment as a place of power, as a place where we decide on what our future is going to be rather than trying to get all the way into the future to do it, and finally, the idea that we're trying to break our mindset from the traditional, from the rigid certainty that is very comfortable, but by purposely seeking out something that's uncertain or be it in a fun way like listening to music can be fun, but it takes us out of what you're familiar with.

In that way, we get to learn more about what we thought we knew and actually have new layers and nuances and so on. That's something to keep in the back of our minds as we do this.

Then really the only thing left to say is John, thank you so much for today, it's a been a pleasure, a wild rollercoaster ride to your thinking, and I think I'm not the only one to say that this has been real fun.

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**John:** Can I just say one other little thing Igor, and you can edit this out if you want, but as a metaphor I'm just giggling to myself, because the people who are listening wouldn't know this, but when we got on the line here, going over this I had misunderstood; I thought that each seminar was 45 minutes for a total of 1-1/2 hours. It was my mistake; you said no, we're really looking at about 1-1/2 hours for each one.

I think I might have paused a little bit, and then Igor was very reassuring – well no, if we need to scale it back or something like that that's okay.

I remember we both just decided well, let's just do this. Let's just do this thing and let's just see what happens. We just did what we were talking about. That's why I'm giggling to myself because now it's like hey, now we're running out of time instead of not having enough content for it, so I think that's sort of a very fitting metaphor given what we were talking about.

**Igor:** I would tend to agree and I very much look forward to what is going to happen in the next session because that's when it gets really wild out of the known box of concepts that we can actually think about, and into brand new territory.

As far as I'm concerned, I'm going to expect much more of the same and at the same time something that I probably haven't even thought about because we won't really know what's going to come out of the interview until we do it, will we?

**John:** That's exactly right. Well put.

**Igor:** Well John, thank you once again and I really look forward to seeing you on the next session. Until then, keep doing what you're doing because it's really working.

**John:** Thanks, Igor, you too.

# Hypnosis Master - John Overdurf

## Seminar 2 – Part 1

**Igor:** Welcome to [StreetHypnosis.com](http://StreetHypnosis.com), my name is Igor Ledochowski and I'm here with master hypnotist John Overdurf. Hi and welcome back again, John.

**John:** Hi Igor, it's great to be back.

**Igor:** Thanks for coming again. In our last session John introduced us to some of his concepts and ideas around how to enter the state of mastery.

Some of the core concepts we talked about were–

1. Number one; being willing to handle uncertainty.

In fact seeking out uncertainty because that's where people grow the most.

2. Number two, is looking at a practical example of where we might use uncertainty to grow, by leaving the field we're experts in, in this case hypnosis, in order to find inspiration to improve our own abilities in the hypnotic field.

Correct me if I've misapplied any of your ideas up until this point in that two second summary.

**John:** Well said.

**Igor:** Very good. Today, I'm very excited because once we have that theoretical basis, the idea that we're seeking uncertainty and we're looking outside of the field that we know, in other words hypnosis, in order to enrich the field what we're going to be doing today is looking at a specific field that has on the surface nothing to do with hypnosis, it's the music industry or the field of music.

We're going to see how we can tease out important hypnotic lessons and principles from our work as musicians or from other musician's work so it has something to teach us.

We're using this as a metaphor shall we say of how you can do this with anything else. It can be physics or mathematics, it could be Vidding culture, it could be social interactions; it doesn't matter what the field is as long as it's not hypnosis, correct?

**John:** That's correct. Something I would say preferably that you're passionate about because that's going to light up a lot more of your nervous system and the learning's are going to go far deeper that way.

**Igor:** That makes a lot of sense because your unconscious mind needs to be involved in this process because basically the unconscious is that part of you that makes the connections between things that seem disconnected.

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**John:** Exactly. Often it may communicate back to you and I think we'll get into this a little bit more.

The way that you'll know that your unconscious mind really is making connections isn't always with some sort of conscious thought but a lot of times it's a communication through your body which is many times beyond words.

To put it in a simple way it's an ah-ha experience, there's a real change in the way that you feel. I think that's one reason why music in this case is an apt metaphor because I think that's a lot of times why people listen to music in the first place; it provides that kind of experience.

**Igor:** Yes, and actually that takes us to the idea which is very close to my heart and I think you would call mind bending language or beyond words, now we have a groovy new title - directionalized ambiguity.

That's something which as far as I'm concerned is the cutting edge of hypnotic language of our current era and music basically has lived there ever since the exception. It's the idea that you take people through experiences that stand outside language. It's something that we can describe with language but never as well as the actual experience itself.

Music takes us directly to it and is one of the few things in our every day reality that does that isn't it?

**John:** I would agree. As you're suggesting it's a universal experience. You can go to any culture; you can use virtually any type of music, as long as the people are really willing to listen to it.

There's going to be a point of inevitability where a person listens to something and they feel moved, sometimes even moved to tears, and many times in fact not even knowing exactly why and even if they try to explain as you're saying, are moved beyond words.

I think other forms of art can do that as well, I'm not suggesting that it's only music, but as what is being demonstrated in some of the newer research in music in the brain that we'll get into later on music does have a different effect on our brain that other things like visual art that people might be involved in, or even sculpture or other forms, literature and things like that.

I know it reminds me of a story that John Grinder, one of the developers of NLP talks about, there was an interview one time, this was probably now about 30 years ago with a very well known modern contemporary dancer, her name was Isadora Duncan.

She was about to premier a brand new performance. After the first night's performance all of the pundits and critics were there, they were all interviewing her and they're all speculating on what did the performance really mean? What was "the message" of what she was trying to say?

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People started to become very direct and they said was this really a description of the war between the classes? Is this really a description of the higher aspects of humans versus the lower aspects? Is it really about the differences between men and women? Is it yin and yang? What is it?

She finally stopped them all and essentially said to them look, if I could tell you what all of this meant and what it actually does mean there would've been no purpose in creating it and dancing it in the first place.

For me, it's a great example of some things we talked about even in the last seminar, the idea of Aristotelian thinking, which is this or that, and how we are so programmed into wanting to categorize something and make it be a certain way at the exclusion of a lot of other things rather than really having the experience inside of perhaps all of those things that all of these people were mentioning as possibilities and experiencing them simultaneously without having to evaluate specifically; it's really this one or that one.

To me, that's the key element that music can provide for us. It literally allows us many times to experience states that could be combinations of things that most of us don't experience, like feeling happy and sad at the same time for example.

Most people want it to be one way or the other as opposed to - to me what people write music about and what poets write about are all of the emotional states that are actually in between the really obvious ones like angry or sad or happy or excited, it's these juxtapositions of all these different states simultaneously that I think really expands our nervous system.

Frankly if we have 10 to the 10 to the 11<sup>th</sup> neural connections in our nervous system, it seems to me we're probably capable of experiencing more than maybe six or seven primary emotions that everybody talks about.

**Igor:** Right for sure, and of course some people are happy to restrict emotions they experience in everyday life because it seems safer or more well-known, whereas, actually the richness in life comes from the ability to be able to be happy about being sad.

It reminds me of a lot of the Japanese Haiku poetry, it has that kind of enlightened sadness, the frailty of life, the vanishing cherry blossom is always a big theme with them but at the same time there's a happiness in that sadness and somehow they wrap the two together in a pretty interesting kind of cultural attitude.

**John:** I agree. If you look at a lot of the Eastern teachings that I'm familiar with, I'm paraphrasing here but Baton Gilee said the way to enlightenment is to hold two contradictory ideas in consciousness and allow a higher order to emerge.

I think even the idea of contradictory ideas to me, where the rubber meets the road is I think intellectually sometimes people can hold two contradictory ideas,

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but I think when you can hold two contradictory states, at the same time, there's a whole different level of evolution that happens when people I guess you could say get comfortable with experiencing it, which would be another feeling in the mix - about the feelings they're having, knowing there's this whole mélange of states that are happening simultaneously.

That's a metaphor and it's an explicit way of experiencing a much more expanded perception of the world that we live in, like experiencing that inside of ourselves.

**Igor:** It seems that music has for centuries been giving us the exact same experiences that people like Milton Erickson have been going after which is to expand people's repertoire of life in ways they couldn't normally conceive of.

It reminds me a little bit of Stephen Gilligan's approach to hypnosis where one of his favorite approaches and one of his exercises he likes doing a lot is where you take one idea like I'm happy, and another one I'm not happy, and isn't it good that you can be happy and not happy both at the same time?

He takes the juxtaposition of two states and mixes them in trance so that you're both the - I guess would that be an inverse and the converse? I don't know but you have the opposite states mixing together at the same time as an experience not as an idea.

That's the thing that makes your neurology pop and say hang on a second, we need to be bigger, wider or more robust to be able to handle this.

**John:** Particularly if you don't have a lot of linguistic angle on it there, so in other words it's really the experience of the music. You can do it with the linguistics as you're suggesting, but when you're doing it purely with just music itself it's such a perfect example of what neuroscience is now calling bottom up neuroplasticity.

This is essentially where the change or the shift in the circuitry really begins from the lower centers of the brain and then they explode if you will up into the higher centers.

That's the experience that produces that real ah-ha moment that many of us have at different times in our life, and it's usually when you're in some process of immersion, you're really involved and there's so much that can be happening outside of your awareness at lower centers where you're making connections and different kinds of states are combining and eventually there's a point where all of that bubbles up into the higher cortical functioning, higher cortical centers.

Then you have the intellectual awareness, I guess you would say that my whole world view has just shifted or my whole way of thinking about this has just shifted and it can start beyond words from the very beginning and eventually then it sort of overflows into something we try to express as language.



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**Igor:** It's interesting you saying that because first of all music is a very direct way to bypass language while still communicating and as you say getting people these experiences.

An idea I just had or a thought I just had that seems to be very relevant there is one of the reasons that Erickson liked the whole idea of implication and using association to trigger a sudden chain of thoughts without directly asking for it, although he could be very direct sometimes as well if he needed to be.

That has the same parallel to music because what he's trying to do there is not taint the actual experience with language, but he only has language to create the experience, so now he uses language like a snooker ball or a pool ball to say okay, I need that color ball to go into the pocket but I can't touch it directly or I'll taint it, so I'll taint this other experience and that will launch it off.

By the time the chain has fired off and the thing I was actually looking for has come up or arisen into consciousness that's an experience that is now no longer attached to any verbal directive so it's not limited or packed into just language, it's just a pure open experience versus the direct version of it which would be it's very direct, this is the experience, it's very linear, this is exactly what you want to have.

Really, then all you're limited to is that experience itself. It can be a tremendous experience but you don't have the expansion element, I guess it goes back to do you want to expand consciousness or contract it? Both have their place but you have to do different things to get different effects.

**John:** Exactly. It's funny that you'd bring up that example because I'm thinking one of the other things obviously that Erickson is famous for, you can use different words here but basically what he would call surprise inductions.

Essentially what that's really about is called an NLP, often a pattern interrupt and then some sort of utilization after that and when you catch that person right in that moment where their conscious programming doesn't really know what to do.

There has been some interesting research done with music and one of the things that our nervous systems just totally dig, just really love, is if there's some sort of repetitive kind of rhythm.

What happens is a really primitive part of our brain actually that affects planning and the small motor movements in our body, and larger motor movements for matter called our cerebellum which is in the back of your head there very close to your brainstem, very low so it's a very primary area.

What it starts to do when it hears a beat if there's a discernible beat, what it wants to do is it likes to follow that.

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If you think in terms of a classic pacing and leading it likes to follow it but the thing that the rest of the brain loves even more is in music terms what we would call syncopation.

Basically, when there's a change in that beat or you're expecting - you hear something like this (snapping) and what starts to happen is the beat starts to skip or maybe it goes into double time or something shifts like that.

What they've actually shown is that when people are hearing this and they're wired up so to speak, what they see again is this cascade - actually an explosion would be better because it's really from the bottom up - coming from that part of the brain into the higher centers because it literally gets turned on if you will by the fact that there was a certain amount of predictability and then there was just the right amount of unpredictability.

The brain says oh, I know what just happened there.

**Igor:** It's interesting you say this because I had a familiar experience. If you go to any of the dance classes, especially back in the '90's where we had the dance trance era, this is a favorite trick of the DJs to make the audience go absolutely nuts.

They'd play a track or a mix of tracks with a very heavy steady rhythm or beat and people were getting into dancing, they get into their groove, excitement builds up and so on and then at some point what'll happen is everything goes quiet.

The beat disappears, sometimes there's melody but sometimes there's nothing, literally silence and suddenly the whole crowd goes wild. It's like a pattern interrupt, and the crowd says what's going on and there's kind of a tension that builds and then he'll turn the stereo speakers like full blast, kick right back into the rhythm, where it was meant to have been had he not paused or taken the sound offline.

Suddenly they are moved by this huge wave of sound that they've been expecting but kind of not getting and I mean the effect is electrifying. The whole crowd goes absolutely crazy.

It's the same thing again where you're using rhythm but actually I think you called it syncopating rhythm, breaking the rhythm but without really breaking it, it pauses basically. Hypnotic pauses, shall we say to amplify the affect even more.

**John:** Exactly. It's like the primitive part of the brain starts to track it but then what happens is our higher centers want to start making predictions. That's sort of how they play together.

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What happens is when something unexpected occurs and the predicted response isn't there, that's what really lights up the nervous system and then there's the moment afterwards where the conscious recognition comes.

It's a lovely example of for me probably the most basic principle in hypnosis, at least as modeled through NLP which is pacing and leading, that whole idea of starting a certain pattern where there's some sort of recognizable predictability and then all of the sudden there's some sort of linkage statement or something that's made and what it does is then the suggestion occurs.

Then something else happens which lights up a bigger part of the brain than what you were dealing with in the first place.

**Igor:** One of the master classes I taught was on what I would call Agreement Reversals. The basic idea of Agreement Reversal is you follow along with someone's train of thought maybe with pacing statements, mind reads or wherever they're coming from.

A classic example is Milton Erickson spending an hour reciting to a patient exactly why they came here to see him. It's like; I just told you all that, right? You see the same thing by the way in jokes. Most jokes have the same thing; they lead your mind down a certain path, down a certain set of expectations.

Just at the end what does it do? The carpet or reality gets whisked out from under your feet, everything twists on its head, and people just sit there for a second saying what just happened?

In terms of jokes people start laughing, in terms of other things like on stage or something like that it feels like a profound moment just happened because your expectations have been turned on their head, but in such a way that the new version still fits whatever the buildup was.

**John:** Exactly. In NLP it's a context reframe. That's really the structure of a joke as you were saying. You have a person, especially the shaggy dog stories where as you were saying it goes on and on then you start to notice there's a repetitive theme that keeps happening and you say I think I know where this is going.

Then all of the sudden when the punch line comes in you're in a completely different context than you were before and it's the juxtaposition of what you had been experiencing with this new context and that's what makes us laugh. That's what makes us say oh that was really cool. It's the same thing in terms of the structure of an ah-ha or as you were saying hypnosis.

What happens is there's that point where there's a shift in context and now the person is evaluating what they had been thinking from a completely different point of view or a completely different context, an expanded context or it could just be a lateral context; just a completely different context.

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Of course, all meaning is context dependent so what happens is the meaning of what they have experienced shifts. Again, all of this happens, we're doing all this big wordy stuff, but the bottom line is all of this can be happening with absolutely no words whatsoever.

**Igor:** For sure. This is kind of our dilemma as hypnotists, words are our tools but we're trying to get people to a place that words don't actually define properly.

**John:** Yes exactly, using words to transcend language.

**Igor:** This goes back to mind bending language or going beyond words and those sorts of things there. Just to tease out another little principle that just came out there and you just reminded me of actually, it made it clear in my own mind, which is in terms of reframes.

I've often wondered why some people can just lay the perfect timing, reframe, it's beautiful to watch, you see the person literally crack open and a whole new viscera of possibilities opens to them. Someone else makes pretty much identical reframe; falls flat on its face and people look at them and go so what?

The classic example would be in the book *Reframing* I think it's - I'm not sure if it's Leslie Cameron-Bandler or someone else who did this reframe - the wife with the shag pile carpet and she hated people's footprints on there and so on.

The reframe there basically was look at the footprints and it means that people you love are in the house as opposed to all gone. If you just said that to her, at that point, her logical mind would be tracking and saying; so what I don't like those footprints; they're still stuck on the footprints.

What she did was very interesting. She did a trance induction which was following the exact same patterns, agreement reversal - talking about this syncopated rhythm and the rhythm was look at the perfect carpet, it's beautiful, it's pristine, it's fluffed up and all the rest of it.

It means that everybody you love has gone, that's like a bombshell. It hits because you've totally done a u-turn on the whole situation. Now that there's a u-turn now she's dropped the client into no man's land, like I don't like this place and I don't even know where it is.

Now, she offers a guiding light saying but hey, why not put a couple of footprints in there? It reminds you your kids are upstairs playing or maybe that big print of your husband. Suddenly all those warm feelings come rushing in because they have somewhere to go as opposed to before when they had nowhere to sit.

**John:** Exactly, that's it. As Erickson said, it really goes back to what we said in the previous seminar. It's human nature for people to either move away from what they don't like or another way of putting it is if they're experiencing some sort of chaos there, in other words in this point the very thing the woman had

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associated with the best feelings she had now is associated with the loss of people she loves.

The conscious experience of that at first is sort of like chaos. What are they going to want to do? Always leap towards some sort of certainty or some sort of understanding and as you're saying that really is the key setup there. That's what really happens.

You followed their model of the world well enough and then what Leslie did there was sort of wrecked the conclusion of the first model of the world and then offered a brand new ending to it and the person is so much more open to it then.

As it is in sales and every other thing it's always all in the setup.

**Igor:** The interesting thing for me here in the context of what we're talking about today is this whole train of thought, this whole insight in terms of how do you make things work and why are they going to listen to a hypnotists in terms of reframing or whatever else you're doing; it all starts with the same seed which is the musical principle which starts with a syncopated rhythm.

I don't know how long it's been standing but I guess it's been around for some time already, which leads us into all these different directions.

- ✓ The idea of agreement and reversals and how to use them.
- ✓ The idea of taking beyond language through implication.

Like part of syncopation what it does is it implies a rhythm that's not there anymore so the person's experience has to fill it in because it's a void.

I find it particularly interesting that we're surrounded by this every day but because we're not paying attention to it we're actually enjoying the analogies between one and the others and saying I can use this here.

For me one of the biggest lessons I ever learned was I went to pause in hypnosis, I went to just sit there and shut up - especially when I'm building a rhythm and I'm halfway through a sentence.

I'll let you start talking midway through the sentence and let them fill in the rest. That again has the same effect but because I'm not saying it now it's a little bit more potent.

**John:** It is and the metaphor is apt in music. One of the things that many people don't think about, but if anyone who is listening here plays a musical instrument you start to learn a lot about this, and that's how to play the silences.

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You've got the airwaves that you're filling so to speak by whatever you're playing but then what really adds the true definition and often the true impact is where are the silences and how do they work?

I'm reminded of the great jazz musician and band leader Miles Davis who really back in the late '50's and early '60's pretty much transformed and took jazz - not just by himself but he was part of a movement that really took jazz to the next level.

One of the things he was known for, even though he was very accomplished, was his really sparse stark arrangements or parts that he would play on the trumpet with a lot of space in between, very often just wafting into nowhere.

He was interviewed about this and he said one of his favorite conventions he liked to do was at the end of a phrase he was playing or if he was finishing a passage he would always leave the last couple of notes or so silent instead of playing them.

It would open the segue up for someone in the band to take it somewhere else. It's a straight forward parallel to what you'd mentioned previously.

**Igor:** It also reminds me another story, you probably know this better than I do, about a pianist - a concert pianist - who was interviewed and asked how is it you play such amazing music? The notes were written all these years ago but you play them better than anyone else.

He turned around and said what you fail to realize is I don't play the notes better than anyone else, what I play better are the silences, the pauses in between. It's exactly the same point. When you're used to that rhythm, when it's on and when it's off, that's where the magic happens. It's the same in hypnosis.

You have people - especially if you're more used to using scripts - the theory is how quickly can you race through the script so the magic has its potency there? Sometimes it's just a question of when do you just shut up so the other person can process it, do it, and have the experience without interference?

It's an intricate thing figuring out the balance between setting up the experience and releasing the experience so actually you have it being experienced.

**John:** I agree and I think that's a great lesson for anybody starting off with hypnosis or even a presenter. The one thing that really superb presenters are willing to do - the term that I use is let it drop.

They say something and they make a point and instead of punctuating the point with another explanation of what they just said what they do is they just stop and they wait for the reaction to take place.

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Again, they're playing the space and the silence. To me if people listening really want to accelerate your hypnotic skill a lot of it really has to do with slowing down. Not just slowing down in terms of slowing down the pace of your words or using fewer words in bunches but rather more really thinking about when do you want to create spaces for the listener to really think about what's being said.

Waiting for that to start to light up before you begin your next point - obviously Erickson was a master at that. It appeals to the same thing you were talking about before, it's the lower centers of the brain that love that predictability and get into that, that love the repetition; the higher centers try to make the prediction.

They're going along a track and all of the sudden now there's a space for the brain to just have an inductive experience of going wherever it wants to go based on the track it was going down.

**Igor:** This also seems to me to be one of the secrets behind mind bending language. A lot of people want to throw these crazy and convoluted language patterns at people at fast fire rates but really the secret is even with a really simplistic language pattern you throw it out there and you get them to have that silence and that moment to really engage with it.

If they answer too quickly you know they haven't engaged with it so you have to fire it right back in again until you hit that point where you can see their whole physiology pausing. Then you know you've got them.

Now they're considering at a level beyond thought even, let alone beyond words, and that's where you want to have them.

**John:** That's it.

**Igor:** We've kind of taken a simple concept, syncopated rhythm, and really drilled down into some detail with it. The more obvious and simple lessons that music has to teach us as hypnotists - what would you say are the top three or so things that are immediately obvious from music that a person could pick up their favorite record right now, listen to it, and say I'm going to take these elements and put them into my hypnotic work because I can see the corollary straight away?

**John:** One for sure - and this really applies whether you're listening to music that is completely instrument or you're listening to music that has some sort of lyrical content; the whole idea of what we call in hypnosis ambiguity.

The idea being of course that music is a device that is often going to number one create a context, but the other thing that happens is any music you listen to, depending on the context in which you're listening, is going to have a different effect also.

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It can be a context creator if you will, or the other side of it is that it can really be influenced heavily by the setup or context that's created in the first place before the person listens to the music. A really simple idea is - and when I did psychotropic grooves, some tracks we'll be playing in a bit - one of the things I was attempting to do was just create music that sonically would have a certain affect on the nervous system.

It was also to create certain states in the listener, sometimes pleasant sometimes not always, but the idea being that you can use music in the same way you would use what we would say in NLP as a resource state.

For example if I say okay I want you to think of a particular issue or something that's on your mind that is unresolved or you're not sure about or you feel stuck about with a certain point of view, and to really get in touch with that.

Now what I want you to do is really listen to this piece of music. Frankly the music - I could select a piece of music that as far as I could tell has absolutely no obvious relationship to what the person is dealing with, whatever the issue is, and more often than not, as long as they're willing to listen to the music and it has something to it that keeps them in the field.

Chances are, when they come out the other side and the piece is done if you were to say them okay, when you're thinking about the issue, what's happening now? It would be highly unusual for the person to not have some other added insight or maybe a different feeling about that, or at least some other different point of view than what they had when they started.

One way to think of it as music as metaphor if you will.

**Igor:** This idea of the emotional roller coaster used as a resource state just to kind of emphasize that point, I've seen it used by a lot of the gun powder and blitz rock stars of the NLP community.

They have things like the circle of excellence; it's a classic example of how they empower someone. The pipsqueak version of empowering someone is look at a circle, feel the better you, and step inside.

Of course, you have those big show men that come around with 20 trucks the size of small nations with their sound equipment, their lightening and everything else coming on, and you have some poor little person stuck on stage with 2,000 eyes watching them. I'm not describing any particular person of course but if I were he'd be really tall.

You have that person and there's lots of pressure and there's this music playing in the background and they just step in - it's an exhilarating experience, they cannot help but have that entire state being shift. That's why we go to rock concerts, our states shift. Now they're shifting the state and he's attaching it to something useful which I think is actually pretty smart.



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**John:** Exactly, it really is. You and I have talked for many years about the idea, the meta pattern of all effective change patterns, which is plug the person into whatever the issue is to associate them to that. Dissociate them just long enough to create a space like we've been talking about and then associating them to some sort of resource.

Once they're in touch with that connecting that resource to whatever the original issue they started with. Music just lends itself so beautifully to that.

It's so simple; you're basically just getting people in touch with whatever they want to get in touch with. Before they start you just listen to the music and then you find out how it all connects up.

You don't really have to make much of a suggestion at all because as most of the research on metaphors shows as long as the person has a good reason to stay in the field - same with binds and double binds and so forth - as long as they have a reason to stay in the field and fully experience whatever is being offered to them.

You find out they want to end up in B, that's often a good reason then for them to say okay, I'm now willing to listen to whatever happens after that.

Without any conscious deliberation what so ever the unconscious mind is going to attempt to say okay, if my idea is I want to go from point A to point B I'm listening to this music - I wonder how we can use that to actually make the change you want to make? That happens completely automatically.

**Igor:** You know how we tell stories and metaphors as a parallel reality to what's actually happening in the client's life and by resolving things metaphorically they'll resolve things for their lives?

I have a friend of mine who is a rapper and he does something genius, I love this to pieces. He caught this by accident. He's a rapper and he always starts his shows off with really angry I hate the world music, the kind of music where teens say hey, let's bounce ourselves into each other and nail it all down.

He shifts throughout the process of his concert so by the end of the concert he's transformed all that tense teenage energy into a very spiritual loving, this is how you can help your brothers and sisters, this is how you'll get strong and live a good life - that's the kind of very positive reinforcing music.

The show is basically the transition or the metamorphosis from anger into a kind of spiritual loving kindness meta kind of place. I think it's ingenious. The audiences go nuts over it because there's a lot of power in it so it's not just like lovey-dovey and do nice things in the world, there's a lot of power behind it but that fuels into this thing.

When I heard his set I thought this guy is ingenious. He's basically chaining anchors using just music.

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**John:** That is ingenious. He's doing the world a nice service by doing it that way for sure.

**Igor:** We've got the idea of ambiguity and this emotional roller coaster and the different ways we can use this or apply that onto our hypnotic work as well.

There's something else we started talking about earlier on and we just touched on this time as well, the idea of rhythm and so on.

- **Do you want to talk on a more basic level about how music can teach us a lot about being better hypnotists in terms of rhythm and those sorts of things?**

**John:** One of the things that - God when I studied ho'opono many years ago, which is the Hawaiian spiritual psychological system, one of the things they would emphasize is how much the unconscious mind or what they used to call the lower self actually liked rhythm and that was always something you'd want to work into whatever you were doing.

Of course, now you look at the research as I was saying earlier and one of the things that happens that is a really interesting process whenever you get into repetition and rhythm, I'll start with that and then I'll add how rhyme fits in.

As your cerebellum is attempting to lock into that rhythm not only does it create this explosion if we change it or syncopate it, the one maybe more stunning thing is that it creates circuits that are usually not there that are direct circuits that go from the primary part of your brain, which is what I've been talking about to the highest functioning part of your brain in your frontal lobe, having to do with intent and purpose.

Those two generally are not lit up at the same time. The thing that's so stunning about the research is it's not that this happens in a peripheral way, there's actually a direct connection that occurs between the most primitive part of your brain and the most sophisticated from an evolutionary point of view advanced part of your brain, having to do with intent and purpose, mission and things like that.

That in and of itself, what we would call that in therapy is that's a parts integration on the grand scale. That's the other thing that just using these kinds of things, how important it is.

There's obviously then the other simpler aspects that happen just through rhythm and repetition, the whole idea of entrainment.

Let's even forget about the more sophisticated thing we were talking about which is starting a pattern and then interrupting it and creating an inductive experience.

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There's a whole different way of going which is we're going to start with a particular rhythm and we're going to keep that rhythm set at a certain pace, at a certain tempo.

What's going to happen is we're going to use that to entrain the brains of the listener or listeners that would be a better way of saying it - the brains of the listeners - so that everybody eventually starts to access a particular altered state that might be related to that rhythm.

There were studies done a long time ago on something called 'suggestopedia', which later evolved into accelerated learning by a guy called Georgi Lozanov.

One of the things they found was that if people were listening to baroque music and the music was essentially paced at 60 beats per minute and people were taught words of a foreign language and as long as those were given on the same beat what they found was that people's ability to remember those words was greatly enhanced.

That was an idea there of using entrainment to create a phenomenon we call hypernesia or increased memory, and then of course later increased memory recall. It can be used for things like that.

**Igor:** If nothing else rhythm is also probably the most basic form of trance induction. You look at all the societies around the world, the "pre-civilized" but there's the rattle, the drum, the bow - basic instruments and all of them are based around rhythm, building up a patten, and then there's dancing around the fire pit or whatever they were doing.

It creates such a powerful rhythm that people get swept away by it and before you know it they're in this other world, the trance world, and they can't help themselves.

I recall a very interesting report in which an anthropologist was studying some voodoo ceremony. He was one of these typical lives above the neck only sort of people, observing and making meticulous notes and so on.

One night he was observing at ceremony that had a lot of crazy drumming and people being possessed by spirits and so on, the rhythm was building over the course of hours and of course, people were being "possessed" so there is a demonstration of trance phenomenon, which the unconscious sees and the unconscious responds to.

The really interesting thing I found was that she later reports how terrified she was because she started losing control as well. She started being sucked into this whole thing despite herself. Here we have an anthropologist who is used to dealing with these things, intellectually knows exactly what's going on and has the understanding of how trance can affect people and so on.

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Nevertheless because of the sheer time element just like being exposed to these rhythms over and over again over several hours, and of course people expressing hypnotic phenomenon spontaneously is priming your unconscious mind as well.

At some point in that ceremony she got sucked into it as well and she "lost control of her body" and started doing all of these talking in tongues, classic shall we say psycho-religious psychological phenomenon coming out.

This was for someone who was trying to resist the process so there's something in the rhythm and the repetition over time of it; I think you called it entrainment which I think is a good label for it, which is for want of a better word seductive.

It's virtually irresistible for the mind to not go into an altered state. If nothing else just from the level of if you want to be a better hypnotist and make sure people go into better trances, start using rhythms and your trances will be more profound instantly.

**John:** Absolutely, I agree. I think another way of thinking about it is people say well, okay I can apply a lot of these hypnotic principles when I'm working with just one person, but how does one go about doing it successfully as a group?

For me there's a lot of different ways but one of the more powerful ways is by having a consistent rhythm to your delivery with a group. What starts to happen is you will entrain the group to that particular rhythm. You don't have to have music or drums or anything like that, it's really just speaking in a rhythm.

The idea is it doesn't mean you can't speed up the tempo. You could speed up the tempo, you could slow down the tempo, and the bottom line is you're still maintaining a particular rhythm.

The idea is if I have some sort of rhythm going like this I can begin to speak really fast and I'm still staying in synch as I'm slowing down. I can begin to speak in a more conversational way and I'm still keeping that same underlying rhythm.

For me that's a very valuable skill to begin to develop, whether you're working with individuals or with groups, and that is maintaining a particular rhythm but realizing that inside of that rhythm there can still be silences like we were talking about, like syncopation.

There could be times when you speed up your speech, there could be times when you slow down your speech and other things too, pitch and things like that, but what we're really talking about here is rhythm and that can have a profound affect on your audience.

Literally, just going from a faster delivery to a slower delivery in cases people will begin to start to space out, to start to wait for the next idea or something,

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and sometimes to begin to consider what's happening at a deeper level without your knowledge.

It's that kind of thing where you can create a lot of great trans-phenomenon just by learning to manipulate your own tempo along with the pauses, but still maintaining a consistent rhythm because that's what keeps the person in the field.

**Igor:** As I recall there's a bunch of audio lectures recorded from Milton Erickson and I remember buying them all back in the early days and listening to them intensively and I remember having great difficulty making it through the whole lecture - not because it was boring but because of course it was Milton Erickson.

This is the key thing; he did not have a single element in her lecture that was an overt reference to trance or going into trance and hypnosis and so on. There was maybe one or two that might call about a suggestion but he had this unstoppable rhythm.

He has this low slow drawl anyway so within five minutes I'm thinking; what did he just say? Within 10 minutes I didn't care, within 15 minutes I was out, and of course by the time I came back again which was usually about 20 minutes after the lecture finished I'd go back and say - what the hell was that all about again?

I play it all over again and it's the whole loop starting again. I've probably lost days of my life doing that.

**John:** On other realities you were living a rich life, you were.

**Igor:** Absolutely. I was just going to comment when you started slowing down and of course I am particularly trained to your voice because as you know I view you as much of a mentor for me, I've followed in your footsteps on many different things, so I've heard you do many trance inductions and I am so prime to go.

As soon as your rhythm switches and that tonality drops a little bit I sit there thinking you know; I don't think I'll be doing an interview today after all. I think I'll just sit here and listen. I hope he keeps going with this demonstration bit because it's getting really good.

**John:** I think that's the value of what we're talking about here, there's so many different ways that we can go about creating a therapeutic trance for people.

To sort of loop it back around to what we started with, because I know we've got more here, but for me I just learned a lot of this stuff really from listening to music and being a student of music..

A lot of it wasn't formal training that I had in hypnosis or NLP, but they ran so parallel, for me at least, that there weren't even any real great leaps sometimes

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in mapping across what I could experience either, from just listening to music or learning to play music with hypnosis. They just seemed to go hand in hand for me.

**Igor:** That makes a lot of sense. Let's take this in a more practical direction. We've talked a lot about drilling down into simple examples of syncopated rhythms; how to polish our hypnotic work conceptually that way.

We looked at some actual; things you can do; ambiguity, rhythms, the emotional roller coaster, which we can just map one to one from music straight into hypnotic work literally in minutes, and improve it within seconds.

We're really looking at music at all the different levels, all the things it has to offer us. You have some music for us today and I don't know if you want to talk about it ahead of time or play some of the music so we can see some of the other effects music has.

It's one thing to be open about these things such as taking a person on a roller coaster of emotions or holding two experiences simultaneously, or having it affect our minds in different ways.

It's another thing entirely to experience it, hear it, and suddenly realize oh my God, I could be doing that with and to my clients because now I've had the experience, I go first, I have a reference experience of what experiences I'm trying to shape.

**John:** What I would say is there's a couple of concepts here that are going to sound very similar to things we talked about before that set some of this up.

One of the more traditional ways of thinking about music composition is a concept called tension and release. Another way of thinking about it is when you listen to a particular piece, whether you understand music, whether you understand that it's in a particular key - and there's research that's actually been done on this.

Whether people know anything about music or not what they understand is if there's what we would call a tonic - this is the home chord, it's probably the most predominantly used chord in a particular song.

What happens is when you start hearing that as a progression moves away from that there's a tendency for your nervous system to want it to come full circle and come back to whatever that tonic chord is.

The idea is that if you move away from it a little bit that starts to create a little bit of tension and there becomes an urge inside the listener for them to want it to resolve.

The idea is in pop music you do it just enough that the person starts to feel like it's moving away but it's sort of a cool kind of tension, it's not uncomfortable,

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and then there's that point where it comes back to the tonic chord and everybody goes oh that feels so good and they say that music makes them feel really good.

All of those are usually in time signatures of four also, so it's a really steady kind of beat. In other forms like jazz you have this idea where you take tension much further.

In other words, you depart literally in more bizarre ways and for longer periods of time. You go further and further away from what this original home was that you set up.

This is what some people call challenging music. There's a point where some people either go wow, I really want this thing to resolve, what am I going to do? Am I going to hang with it and let it take me somewhere? Do I just stop listening because I can't stand this tension anymore?

That's why a lot of forms of jazz aren't very popular because it challenges the listener to have to sort of stay in and hang in long enough to wait until the whole thing resolves which sometimes could be 10 minutes as opposed to maybe five seconds or something like that.

Part of what we'll do here - the samples aren't going to be quite that long that people can experience but that's the one concept to be aware of. The other one was we were saying is entrainment.

The other one is you can use music for different things. One of the things is to start to expand your sense. I've got one piece here that is the intro to a song on psychotropic grooves called 'Thread'. I'm simply using a keyboard and holding one key down. What you're going to hear is what I like to call a little bit of wobble, or in technical terms they call it modulation. When you start to then play another note it starts to create overtones or harmonics.

In other words, your brain starts to hear more tones than what are actually present in terms of just the mechanical part of it. I might be only playing one note and segueing into another note but it starts to sound like there are a couple of other tones that are happening there at the same time and they're wobbling back and forth.

That is an experience that for most people will create an altered state, just listening to something that simple. What I attempted to do with some of the music we're going to listen to here is use pretty conventional ideas in music but really stack them against each other so it's more stimulating to the brain, it's more stimulating to the nervous system and you can use it for things like a training device like this.

You can use it to go into something that seems really smooth and then get very chaotic at a certain point where there are many levels going on. I might have four or five different harmonies on top of the melodies.

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It's like; which one do you listen to?

- ✓ Do you continue to stay with the one you've been listening to?
- ✓ Do you start to skip to another one?
- ✓ Do you expand your aural awareness all the way out so that you're actually hearing all of them and how they all are interlocked together the same way visually if you were looking at a Persian carpet?

There are all these different threads that are actually interwoven but they create these patterns. You're either taking it all on board or taking a particular thread.



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## Seminar 2 – Part 2

**Igor:** Just before we start listening to this music I want to take the principles you've been talking about and see if I can map them across to hypnosis so that people as they're listening to them or after they listen to them can start thinking about how these are experiences and how we can create them.

Taking the idea of tense and release cycles first of all, this is a classic thing we do in hypnotherapy. If we don't create tension then in the magic formula you have the meta pattern for all change, you have to activate the problem.

If you just go straight into the nicey-nice resourcing, empowering and all that sort of stuff that's all well and good but if it never attaches to a problem in the first place there's nothing that it's releasing, there's no relief.

Tension relief is the classic bit where what's the problem, let's dig or root around in that problem a little bit so it really hurts, not because we want to torture the person but because we need that tension like a springboard being compressed so when their resource comes it gets launched into a better place and has something to work with.

A classic example was in the Mundy text where I saw Erickson do this where he gets Mundy to sit there and regress to a point where she remembers being spanked for being naughty as a child.

You can see little trickles of tears in the corners of her eyes as little Mundy getting spanked and he builds this tension up almost cruelly, but then of course he resolves it by saying you can make this disappear by opening your eyes.

Then she starts practicing. Close your eyes get spanked, open your eyes she's free—spank, release—spank, release—by that she started to learn how she can release moments of pain in her normal everyday life which is why she came to therapy, so she has control over it, but she couldn't have that unless she'd learned this whole tension release cycle in the first place, right?

**John:** Right, exactly. That's it.

**Igor:** The second idea that comes to mind and this is something I'm really looking forward to in terms of the music is how you said you take simple musical devices and you stack them on top of each other to reload a strong experience.

We're going to be listening to very simple bits of music and we're going to be listening to very complex bits of music that stack different simple bits of music together and again, to me that reminds me of how you stack suggestions, how you stack constructs.

You have inductions which get stacked on top of each other, suggestions that get stacked on top of each other, you have representational systems stacking on top of each other, you have rhythms you can stack together, you have

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associations and implications which then stack different experiences through one set of suggestions and so on.

The more you can pack into a simple statement the more meaningful it becomes and that meaning really is talking about again; loading the suggestion up, loading the experience up as much as possible so that lots of simple things feed into that one utterance as a result of which it becomes more "hypnotic" or "trippy" and trance inducing and so on.

**John:** Exactly. The one idea there is that the music - so you have all the non-linguistic parts of music which are going to be lighting up a lot of things in the nervous system, so again that has to do again when we're speaking with how we speak, the delivery of how we're speaking.

On top of that we have the content in terms of what we're adding there. When you get the balance just right you really are literally lighting up both hemispheres of the brain at the same time which for many people as they go through life is not a common experience.

That alone is like instead of having one engine firing in there you have two engines firing at the same time in a synergistic kind of way. The more you can stack these kinds of elements on top of each other the more you get widespread neural activation throughout not just the brain but the entire nervous system.

**Igor:** That is a good thing as far as I'm concerned.

**John:** Yes, me too.

**Igor:** Shall we cut into one of the pieces of music and start talking about the nuances that can teach us?

**John:** Yes. I should say that the samples that we're using here are as good of samples as we can do so that the file sizes were small. What I would suggest is that if people aren't listening to this interview up to this point with headphones, it's going to make a really big difference if you listen to all of these samples with headphones.

You will not get the same effect, even with decent computer speakers that are free standing. You'll start to hear some of the separation. To start to pick up some of the nuances this music was really made for headphones. I just wanted to say that up front.

### [Music Track]

**Igor:** So I'm sure everyone who has listened to that piece will have their own experience of it, but I'd like to share a little bit of what happened in my mind as we went through that two minute loop and then perhaps you can help me break

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down what you were trying to achieve and how that fits what you were doing with that music.

Again that'll be elements that we can start taking over into hypnosis and things like that.

For me what I noticed was when we started off there's a guiding thread, a theme which actually ended up being a very good focal point of attention, all the distractions around me disappeared. It's raining outside and I stopped hearing it, I stopped seeing the room around me, I just started focusing on that thrum.

Of course, there's enough little things on the outside that were a little bit interesting but enough to keep it interesting without being boring. The really interesting thing that happened was when this attention got locked down to a point there came a point where for want of a better word that thread seemed to wobble to me, like it seemed like two things happening at the same time by going in two different directions.

That was a very interesting experience because actually I felt as though my mind was splitting in two and going in two different directions at once. I had my eyes open and for a second I felt a little dizzy, I said oh hang on a second.

It's almost like when you drop two pebbles in a pond and they ripple in different directions.

**John:** The interference patterns.

**Igor:** It sort of harmonized again so the main thrumming element recaptured my attention and the second time it happened rather than my awareness splitting in two and going two different directions what ended up happening is the whole of my awareness just opened up.

If we're using the metaphor of a landscape or a vista, if at first I was looking just at one point and then looking at two towers at opposite ends of the vista.

The third time it happened or the second time it happened it felt like I was a wave and I was taking on the whole of this at the same time and dropping a pebble in a pond. I was seeing more and more of that landscape at the same time.

Does that make sense?

**John:** That's a great experience it's very articulate too.

**Igor:** The next bit that came in, it was sort of a big shift, it was the - I'm not sure if the hint of the drums came in first which was kind of fun...

**John:** That's what comes in first.

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**Igor:** That was coming in as I was expecting something to speed up. It felt like a running rhythm. The first big thrum of - I guess would that be a bass guitar or something like that?

**John:** I actually did that on a keyboard but it was just a really low bass note, yes.

**Igor:** That really big heavy bass note felt like the mother ship just came up behind me and pushed me forward or something. It took everything I was doing before on a light level and it was almost like an instant deepener.

Does that make sense?

Everything suddenly amplified into more and then when the other thrumming bass note started coming in it just felt richer and more of that kind of experience. That's kind of a summary of where it took me as we listened to that two minute piece.

**John:** Wow, I think that's a great description. If everybody listening to it had that kind of experience it would be a wonderful thing too.

What happened for me, maybe it would be interesting to some folks - when I first started putting this piece together, actually I do a lot of this on an airplane because I've got a lot of software synthesizers that I can turn my keyboard into looking like a regular piano - a limited one, obviously.

Sometime I come up with rough ideas when I'm on a plane because I'm sitting there for long periods of time. That very first note, I would say when I got onto that and got it the way I wanted it I probably listened to only that note for roughly an hour but didn't realize it.

I just got so interested in all the overtones and I mean I was just hanging out with it. It was a great trance and great meditation. I thought okay, that gave me the idea of why eventually - I didn't know that at the time - but that's why it became called 'thread', because the idea was there's going to be this thread that's going to run through this entire piece.

I'll play maybe a little part after this, just a smaller part, this is about a six minute song altogether but I'll play just a little part in the middle so you can hear that this thread continues. That one tone continues as you were saying, and it continues all the way through what become many layers of other stuff.

Then it's like; do you follow that thread? You can, that's a really interesting thing to do in and of itself is to always keep your attention fixed on that while this other stuff is happening.

- **Do you feel yourself being naturally pulled to others?**
- **Do you take in the whole landscape or soundscape, so to speak?**

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**Igor:** The other thing you just made me think of as you were talking about that and reflecting back on the experience there, it also reminds me very much of what a double induction feels like.

You have one hypnotist starting off and running a thread or a movement you get used to, sort of a rhythm gets built up by one hypnotist. When the second hypnotist comes in the first time it's quite shocking, it's like what's going on there?

After a few kind of like interference patterns, a little cross talk with the other hypnotist, it actually becomes really pleasant because your whole experience opens up.

You have that thing where the hypnotist can move around and suddenly they talk much more intimately right behind you, behind both ears, so they've moved around you from a casual position just sitting next to you, right up close and intense, and become suddenly very personal.

You actually have created in terms of the musical movement the auditory signature for a pretty profound trance process itself. Forget the content for a moment, just how to orchestrate a very pleasant trance experience you could take the same themes and orchestrate it by saying how would I do this as a hypnotist instead?

**John:** Absolutely. We may even have an example of that before we're done with this.

**Igor:** I would not be averse to that.

**John:** To get back to the very end of that sample there where there's the big subsonic bass note that was really - obviously the drums start to create a little bit of a tension in a sense that you feel like something is going somewhere, you wonder where it's going to go, and then there's that big boom.

That sort of really sets up the anticipation too, it's sort of like okay, what's going to happen after this dies down? That's essentially where I start to come in, where I start layering other melodies, I start putting a couple other lines on top of that and it becomes I guess you would say in a marginal way a bit more musical rather than meditative as the first part was.

**Igor:** It felt very much like a big door had opened up. I guess the trance equivalent would be like the classic counting down deepener. When you finally get to that zero and you say with commitment and purpose and meaningfulness, the client knows this is it.

We've reached ground zero, this is where the work is going to start happening. The implication is loaded not just in the progression of counting down so you see it coming, but when you actually say it with gravitas the client is told basically alright buddy, we've done the preliminary dancing around the stage bit, now it's time to get some work done.

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**John:** You are here now.

**Igor:** Exactly.

**John:** What I can do is rather than switching to a couple different other pieces, I might as well just play sort of a middle - I think this is a middle section of this - that will give people an idea of where we go from something really simple and you'll have to sort of imagine that things have gotten layered on top of each other because I think what I have here is probably after a number of things have been layered.

I have to listen to this but I have a feeling that's where it is.

**Igor:** Okay, so we're going to play the thread sample now.

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** The next piece in our minds we've left the point where we had that big thrum and then the big bass note started coming in to build up a new experience and that's opened up a new landscape of experiences. Somewhere within that landscape, we've moved on the journey somewhat, this bit we're about to listen to now, that's where it sits. Is that right?

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** Now that we've got the context let's play the music.

### [Music Track]

**John:** Igor, it wasn't exactly what I thought.

**Igor:** That's okay. Should we talk about this one quickly first and then we'll have another piece? I think there are some very interesting pieces that came out of this.

**John:** Really what was happening with this piece is this is where I wanted it to purposely sound angelic, very sort of pleasing. It's actually after this I think where I start to put the other layers in, in fact right where it stopped is where stuff starts to come in.

**Igor:** I find it interesting because now there's a lot more things going on than the original thread which was a very simple thing. Now we have the thread plus a thrumming plus the drums plus a few other rhythms starting to sort of wind around there.

In terms of mapping this across the hypnotic world what it kind of started reminding me of was a process I call pyramiding suggestions. You take a

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bunch of suggestions that relate on a theme, let's say self esteem, you run through them and with every new suggestion you offer you repeat the old one.

It's sort of like the partridge in a pear tree, that old Christmas song. You say you're feeling relaxed, you're feeling comfortable and relaxed. You're body is more peaceful, comfortable, and of course relaxed. Every time you do that of course that word relaxed becomes a more profound suggestion because it's being layered in with more and more meaning.

Your guiding theme suddenly has more meaning. By the end of it you can just take someone and say just remember, every time something happens, just take a breath and relax.

Suddenly, like half an hour's worth of suggestion is packed into that one word which becomes the anchor or the trigger for the whole hypnotic experience you've had. It becomes a very nice handle by which somebody can re-access those states, those empowerments and those resources and so on.

That's something like what this music is doing. It starts with the thread which is relax, and it starts building things around it - comfortable and relaxed, tranquil comfortable and relaxed, feeling good about yourself, thinking about who you are as you're comfortable and relaxed.

That repetition of the theme, comfortable and relaxed, comfortable and relaxed - over and over again - builds all those qualities into it and has a very profound effect on people. It's a very pleasant way to go through a trance process, I will emphasize on that one.

**John:** Erickson would do a similar kind of thing where he would deliver a metaphor and at some point he would have a sum up of the metaphor.

It wouldn't necessarily be the punch line of the metaphor, in fact usually it wouldn't be because you wouldn't want to say what that was, but there would be some embedded - usually marked out - phrase or something in the metaphor itself so that he does two or three metaphors, each one having a phrase or so, that is connected at the deep structure to all the rest of the metaphor.

At the end he does a more obvious trance induction where all he's doing is doing more of a standard pace and lead induction but he begins using all of these words in different sequences and it's a lot like imagining that you've got this thing on the surface that's one word and then below the surface you see this whole root system that's getting moved along.

It's like dragging a folder that's got 100 different files in it that every time he's saying these words its lighting up all these other associations and then you start combining all these things together. It's a very powerful way to work. That's the idea I get even when you're talking about pyramiding, it's a very similar concept but unique to you.

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**Igor:** Well nothing is unique, everything has been borrowed or stolen or polished from someone else. I'll take no credit for any of my work.

On the interesting side in terms of those experiences we were talking about I think it happens naturally also.

For example, the idea of personal trance word, which is a loaded phrase or word that is built up particular significance to someone, and it comes across - I know you do it a lot in your work when someone says powerful or you see their whole neurology light up positively, or they'll say something like 'Tinker Bell' and suddenly the whole body is cringing, and you can see that that's loaded negatively.

Those are the same examples neurologically speaking it's just that natural living has loaded this phrase with more of these meanings and attachments so by the time they've come to you it's either massive resource or a massive problem. Either way, we'll have to use or address it in some way during the session.

**John:** Exactly. Korzybski talked about that whole idea. The term he used was 'semantically packed words'.

He was meaning it more in the sense that you were just describing there, that they were a word that we could say has a significant emotional response to it number one, it could be either good in the judgment of the person or not.

Secondly, and this is the interesting thing, the ones that had the greatest effect were semantically packed words that had multiple levels of meaning.

In other words, high levels of ambiguity at the same time got a lot of emotion attached to it. If you're thinking in terms of the nervous system it's just more and more widespread activation is happening. It could mean a lot of different things simultaneously to the individual unconsciously.

**Igor:** When we listen to more complex or should we say sophisticated pieces of music, they're actually showing us if you take each element and think of it as a suggestion or a resource or an experience and you combine them together, they're actually showing us how to create these semantically packed words or phrases, or as I would call them trance words or phrases, for ourselves.

By following the same pattern we're just plugging in different content where the music was.

**John:** Exactly. A good example particularly of the idea of all the multiple levels and so forth, in classical music is just listening to any of Bach's fugues. You've got essentially sometimes he was playing six parts. He only had two hands but he



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was playing six different parts at the same time, all in counterpoint to each other, sometimes in unison, sometimes they lock up, sometimes they go apart.

That's one reason why a lot of people think music is documented to have more stimulating affects on the higher centers of the brain, then a lot of other kinds of music, it's the same idea.

**Igor:** Sure. Again, we start listening to a simple piece of music, something which we think is just enjoyable but actually when we think about it as hypnotists we can tease out some pretty profound hypnotic patterns and principles.

**John:** Exactly. It's amazing how that happens.

**Igor:** I know it's great, isn't it? What else is in your magic grab bag of hypnotic goodness?

**John:** This is sort of an addition here, but I wanted to actually play - I might as well keep it on the same track because then people will hear the progression.

We started to add sort of the angelic part there and now what we'll do is we'll play in the next part here where there's more complexity.

### [Music Track]

**Igor:** That was a very interesting piece of music. We can of course now hear the steady progression from the other two pieces; it's gotten much more complex.

Some of the things I really enjoyed about that was how we have a lot of stuff going on and this is like the spire and consciousness of music going around the heavy theme in the middle, pulling attention back, and then there comes this point where it all disappears and you just have this angelic music.

It feels like there's only the angelic music and that dies down. For a moment I thought it as going towards silence, this is the end of the track, but ironically - and it took me a few seconds to realize this, that running theme we started off with, that sort of hum, was there all along it's just I couldn't hear it.

I honestly thought this was it, we're coming to the end; it's all quiet now. Suddenly I heard that hum again and I said hang on a second, that's been here all along, I just didn't notice it because everything else was kind of engaging my mind and it wasn't until everything got more silent that I realized it was there.

For a while my mind actually blanked it out, which I think is very interesting.

**John:** I can tell you, because I did create it, if we would show you the visual representation of the wave form you would see that it was unaltered basically. In other words the volume was the same the whole way through there but it gets lost as you were saying because you start hearing all these other harmonics clustered around it.

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That was obviously on purpose to create that kind of effect. The metaphor is funny Igor. I hadn't thought about this for a long time because I've been using it more as a teaching tool for meditation lately but originally when the word thread came in there was obviously the musical idea but what this represented to me was our life.

You start off alone and there's a part there, there's about another two minutes after the piece ended that we just listened to where it sort of goes back into the original theme but in reverse.

You go through, you start alone, and then you start mingling with other people I guess you would say and then your life gets fuller and fuller and fuller and sometimes you think it's almost over or you go through a transition but there's still this thread that's like your spirit, your soul that continues to go through.

That was really once I got into the serious part of doing that little piece of music there, that was really emotionally what I was feeling when I was doing that.

**Igor:** This comes into the same idea where we love those musicians best, that are telling their life stories with their music.

Again, as a principle and as a hypnotist this brings to mind the idea that as a good therapist you'll find a balance point between how much of your own life do you reveal to the client, how much vulnerability do you share with them as part of making the whole therapeutic process more real, rather than just being some clinician that very sterilely performs a procedure on someone which can work, but has nowhere near as much impact as the other type.

**John:** I totally agree. I think that again, through your own self disclosure - done appropriately because it's obviously not about us when a client comes to see us - but it adds so much more depth and it adds a backdrop, an emotional landscape the same way some of the sound creates a soundscape or background the melody can play through.

You enrich a process when you can interject other levels that are things that when a person reviews the session that they had or certain words, in that bundle if you will is not going to just be the "technique" that was done, but there's going to be this humanness in some of the stories or metaphors that went along with that.

I think that's a really important part of the process in doing therapy that a lot of the therapies that call themselves technologies don't embrace as much as maybe they could.

**Igor:** I agree with that. Just to take that idea a little bit further, when we listen to someone else's music, especially someone like - oh you'll know him, I forgot his name now - Johnny Cash - who talks about his life in pretty brutal direct sort of ways, talks about the messy parts not just the happy parts.

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The other one I know you like a lot is Bruce Springsteen who does something very similar. What we do when we hear these people talking about their lives essentially musically, it becomes an emotional Rorschach, onto which we project our own lives and really appreciate them for being so honest about their journey because it ends up reflecting back on us.

We see our journey through whatever music we're listening to and hence are either comforted or inspired or whatever it is. Going back to the therapeutic process I think the line for self disclosure isn't how much to want to tell them so I can feel good, or am I imposing on this other person and really putting more burden on them than they need to carry?

The big question to me is not so much doing that but it's presenting enough of your life, the mistakes as well as the triumphs, that they can see themselves and their situations reflected in that.

It becomes another metaphor, it's like telling another story but it has much more depth to it because it's real and there's something about that humanness, that human contact that really in my opinion is where the real magic happens.

The technique is just something you do to keep their mind busy while something bigger is at work.

**John:** I totally agree. That has sort of been my position too, is that the obvious - on the first take what are the techniques? You could say to fixate the client's conscious mind and to open up possibilities unconsciously for them, but what I really think is that the techniques are also there to structure our conscious minds so that we have something to do.

That way, together our collective unconscious minds or the energy that's created in that relationship can produce something that is more synergistic and beyond what the techniques can really describe.

To me the techniques, what they do is they create a context. They don't necessarily create the change that the person wants, we're all changing anyway as we talked about before, but what I'm talking about is creating a context for something synergistic to happen that wouldn't typically happen if the person was by themselves.

The techniques are just one way that we structure those situations but my position is even now we still don't really know in definitive terms how psychological healing takes place, how all of that takes place.

We know more than what we used to for sure, but nobody really knows what's going on. We can only look at it at different levels and there are many levels we may not have looked at.

The quick metaphor here that I've always been a fan of learning how to change our states and manipulate our brain waves and for many years it was always

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about slowing your brain waves down from say beta to alpha to theta maybe even to delta.

The last few years now scientists have tracked these higher level waves called gamma waves which are probably more significant than any of the other ones, at least in terms of enlightenment, yet they were never looking in that direction.

They were always looking in the direction of oh things must be slowed down so this is where all the good stuff is and they never realized oh my God, four times the cycling speed of your normal rhythms you might have these other things that are bursts called gamma waves that are really the key to people getting clarity and enlightenment and things like that.

To me while we have patterns that can take us certain places and describe certain things to people, structure an interaction between a client and a hypnotist, what we really don't know is what are all the other levels that we don't know about yet that might be even more significant?

**Igor:** Is this for example, how taking the idea out of the hypnotic context and into like the more Eastern traditions like the yogic principle, where you'd have some student coming up and their big life suffering gets spilled out in front of their yogic master or guru and they say great, now let's sit there and breathe.

What he's basically doing is he's not saying it cruelly like suffer you boy, because you just exposed yourself and I'm not going to do anything about it. The sitting there and breathing is doing something about it and their philosophy of course is the idea that he's projected some psychic healing vibe which is going to help him release this thing.

Whether that's true or just a context that actually creates a ritual that allows it to release naturally doesn't really matter. That again shows to us how silence is sometimes exactly the right thing to allow the healing to occur and of course the techniques are just ways of building up the pressure so the silence has more meaning.

This is the classic integration of course, this is the bit where everyone - the pay dirt every hypnotist hopes for is, when they see all the tears streaming down, where he gets it back out and says okay, my job is done.

**John:** That's it. I think that was the idea here, was to keep loading up with the music, loading up theme after theme, and eventually it does resolve back to that same one thread, that same one tone. The idea that you're stacking and stacking, and then it's up to the listener to decide how they want to listen to that but that was the intent there.

**Igor:** Again, just to follow that idea through this is kind of like those hypnotherapists, and even those NLP practitioners who will stack one technique after another technique, they'll use one and just as it starts to fail they'll jump onto another and another.

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It's not that they've all failed, it's that they're all themes like in this music, building up to crescendo and it's building up more pressure until you find you've built enough pressure for the egg to crack and the problem to start spilling out properly and then basically the catharsis, the release of whatever toxic psychological states that were inside to start releasing.

Being able to skip between inductions, between hypnotic procedures, between techniques is another way of building that pressure which allows us then to eventually come to that massive moment of release which we all really want.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** We've followed this one theme through quite nicely, and it's very elegantly done. Think about it, it's a six minute piece of music that has given us some very profound insights into the whole hypnotic process.

I think its saying a lot as far as I'm concerned. I think it says a lot in terms of your idea that we leave the field to find greater insights but you have to look for them as well, right.

**John:** That's it. In the same way, you have to be open to them in the same way you were open to listening to them in a way that you were making all these kinds of connections too.

Again, that's sort of the key piece. When we first opened the topic we were discussing the idea of passion and having - if you're going to pick something outside the field make it something that - the word I would use is competes with your study of hypnosis in so far as gosh, I've got some free time, what do I want to do here?

Then you know you have something that is at least equally if not more passionate about. Again I think that fuel - passion is fuel. What it does is it gets you through situations you wouldn't normally want to see your way through the whole way.

It allows you to develop these other points of view, these other realities by hopefully getting to a point - it doesn't have to be the same level of competence that you would have in hypnosis but it just brings in a whole different view, a whole different layer, a whole different reality from which you can observe your hypnosis practice.

**Igor:** For sure, I totally follow that. It's that fuel that we're looking for. In terms of the idea of the passion and how that fuels certain things; does music have something to teach us about that as well in terms of how to maintain our passion even as hypnotists or our passion to keep searching beyond the bounds of hypnosis to improve what we do as hypnotists?

**John:** I guess I can only say that for me it does. I think that the one thing that you have there is - well, I'll sort of segue into something here. When Carlos

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Castaneda, who wrote this whole series of books, called *The Yaqui Way of Knowledge* and *The Teachings of Don Juan*, his teacher an Indian shaman from Mexico, one of the things he talked about is the ability to build separate realities.

The idea is in the beginning you really are building a separate reality. You're building something and you have to live in that long enough so that it begins to grow, first germinate and then really grow and develop into something that is solid enough that you can go there when you want to.

You can go there and experience life from that reality whenever you want to. The idea that he was very clear about was having this separateness in the beginning, not being too quick to want to integrate those or collapse that with something else.

For example, if I use music, for me personally music - before I went to college and my first year in college I thought I was going to be a music major and I thought I was going to be probably a guitarist in a band, that was really my aspirations at the time.

Through various and different influences, some outside and some inside I guess you'd say, I discovered psychology. For years since then, because that was in my late teens and early 20's, on and off I've played guitar and some other things.

Over maybe the last seven years I've probably played a lot more but one of the conflicts I had, and I would've called it a conflict, was do I just stop what I'm doing and just really go to music school and do that and get it out of my system or do I stick to what was at the time my day job which was doing therapy and training and things like that?

I did choose to do that because what started to happen after a period of time, I think in a more deliberate way, this stuff started to seep into music, music started to really seep into the work I was doing with hypnosis and NLP.

The reality that I had built in hypnosis and NLP actually then helped me break through a number of limitations that I had around continuing to develop that reality called my music life, I guess you could say.

There started to be the opposite thing. It wasn't just that music was enhancing what I knew that was sort of my day job, but now what was starting to happen was the other side was starting to happen.

It actually got me through things to the point where in the last few years these two have merged in ways that I would've never imagined. I make music; people hire me to make music for CDs and things.

I make my own music but I never did that for that purpose. I did it because I just really loved music and there were a lot of times when I questioned to

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myself where's all this going? Am I wasting my time? Maybe I should just be doing this other thing called my main field of study.

That became a metaphor for me in a lot of other areas because I started to realize it's worthwhile to pursue something for no other reason than you feel really good while you're doing it and you know it is bettering you as a person.

You may not know how, you might not know how is it going to generalize, and for me I think it's actually better if you don't attempt to do that. Going back to the Don Juan teachings, to maintain that separate reality long enough that it finds its own higher order and it begins to merge and it begins to integrate, and then it's time to start to look for other realities you can create that ultimately do the same thing.

**Igor:** Again, this kind of reminds me a little bit of Erickson's work where he used to do things that would nonplus people, where he would leave open loops or send people off to do things that no one had any idea what it was until it naturally found its integration point.

A life with new richness, passion and just aliveness exploded for the client at that point. The classic example of course is the blinding flash of color story if you recall.

That's a classic example of the same thing, he's created a new reality which is, some day you'll see a blinding flash of color which will make sense of all of this that forced a timid housewife to start exploring her environment and go from her environment to the bigger U.S.

Suddenly, start climbing mountains and go outside the U.S. into more exotic locations until one day all those experiences collapsed when she indeed saw a blinding flash of color which I think was a bluebird or some bird flashing past her.

**John:** A red headed wood pecker.

**Igor:** There you go. Who would've thought? If you would've said one day you'll see a red headed wood pecker and you'll be feeling really happy, that would be the direct way of doing it.

By just saying you'll have no idea how this relates until it happens, it gives the unconscious mind so much scope and freedom to follow the parameters which is healthier happier richer life without any constraints. It can fit that person's life perfectly.

Again, we have this beautiful synchronicity or this beautiful parallel reality between what you're saying there in terms of music, hypnosis and how we work hypnotherapy.

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**John:** Exactly. I think that's a key element as a hypnotherapist to realize that its like well, will every change occur in an observable way in every session.

On a certain level, you may be observing, maybe in terms of setting up a present state and an outcome state, but in terms of that massive transformation where the person really goes I'm absolutely different in ways I could have never imagined from how I was.

That is a function of building that separate reality, i.e. all those sessions that you've had with that person begin to have an additive effect, as long as you're providing their unconscious mind with ample room.

Number one, as long as they have a reason to stay in the field and they're passionate about it or there's enough coming in that they're saying in the moment this is a cool process I want to keep going through it, eventually there is that point where that reality becomes strong enough that it merges with everything else that was not that reality.

That's when you just have that widespread critical mass where everything pops. That's when the person says you know what? I really like this stuff I think I want to take some training now.

**Igor:** The key thing for me there is again you're letting the unconscious mind choose the timing because it has a big picture. It knows when you're ready for it or not.

You're not trying to hurry it along. I see this happening a lot in therapy, I see it happening in training, where people are in such a hurry to get to the end point that they're missing the fact that there's a much better endpoint and all they have to do is wait.

Enjoy that process, revel in the inductions that you're doing, revel in the visualization of some future goal that you're having without trying to break your head about how you're going to achieve it, when are you going to achieve it, where are you going to achieve it and everything isn't happening fast enough.

You let that element go but you keep engaging in the reality, the alternate reality of that goal, to the point where it surprises you and stuff starts happening.

You think; how could this possibly happen? How could I possibly have planned this thing?

**John:** Exactly.



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**John:** That's when you discover how much more you are than what you think you are. That's when you have a palpable experience of that where you realize I could have never planned this out this way.

I could have never had everything line up with all the complexity, yet in some ways the simplicity of wow, I can just think differently about this now, automatically. That is the joy of realizing that you're more than what you think you are. That is the benefit of learning to work with your own conscious mind.

**Igor:** This goes right back to what we started the theme on today, which is the idea of top-down change and bottom-up. Top-down being it's consciously driven, you have to hammer it in. It's very specific. It's like a nail being driven into a board. When it's been nailed hard and long enough, it will stick and it will take weight.

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** The opposite, the bottom-up version, is more like a well bubbling up out of the ground where the water seeps out here and there and everywhere. Before you know it, you have a lake that will feed life for miles around.

It's a longer process perhaps in some respects; sometimes it's shorter, but it's much more all encompassing. It's a much bigger, wider area that's been affected and actually in many ways it's a much easier way to change as well because it requires a heck of a lot less effort.

**John:** Exactly. That's the key thing. It's really about creating the context and letting go rather than white-knuckle changing it, which is what a lot of the more conscious-oriented therapies want us to go.

**Igor:** This basically takes us back down to the idea of the brain, because if we're talking about what elements of the brain are engaged in terms of the change.

Is it the upper regions, the neuro cortex, the shall we say newer parts of the brain that drive the change, or are you letting it bubble up from the older parts of the brain, the limbic system and maybe even the reptilian part of the brain, which are more primitive systems but have much more juice or power in some ways.

➤ **How does that brain and music combine to show us again how we as hypnotists can do a better job?**

**John:** A couple things. One I had mentioned briefly. Just the idea that by starting something as simple as a repetitive kind of pattern, what starts to happen is that you get the primitive parts of the brain involved right away.

Once you do that, if you begin to add in the other elements of music; you start to add in, if it's lyrical music rhyme, harmony from a metaphor point of view, just

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think of that as stacking metaphors. Having three or four metaphors all of which are conveying a similar kind of theme but with a very, very different kind of plot or backdrop, but the message could be very similar to the person or it allows them to select a similar message.

That's a way of thinking about, it's like harmonic metaphors so that you're not just telling one, and you're telling a number of them.

I'll never forget when I first was learning NLP I was raw. In fact, I don't think I was even learning at that time "NLP". I think it was more like "Ericksonian training" and I was pretty raw. It was like maybe after a month or so of training, and I was starting to get the ideas of metaphor in sort of a native kind of way.

I had a guy come in who was a recovering – actually barely recovering – heroin addict who was sent to me by the court system. He was a pretty intellectual guy, and I knew that they referred him to me because he had sort of run rings around a couple other people and nobody really knew what to do with him, and for whatever reason they picked me.

I started to work with him and all I did, it was interesting I got, all I did with him was he would bring up whatever the issue was, and with the limited knowledge that I had, all I would do for roughly one hour is tell him as many metaphors as I could think of until I had completely exhausted every example I could think of.

Then what would happen is usually he would then, after maybe two or three stories, he would make a comment ... and I wasn't deliberately doing anything that I thought was particularly transient or hypnotic.

I was just delivering sometimes a 30-second anecdote, sometimes a five-minute experience, just stuff like that, and it was really interesting because I could tell that it was having an effect, but it wasn't real tangible in the beginning.

After about the fifth session he said you know, I never thought I'd ever want to come to see a therapist now I look forward to it. He said every time I think when I've just opened one door, it seems like you've helped me open another 50.

For me, it was just a lovely explanation of an inductive process, of unconscious activation where he learned now that having one idea could just be a doorway to all these other doorways.

Obviously at that point of my career, which was pretty young, it opened a lot of doors for me too because I really started to see the significance of doing something just as simple as what we could call now stacking harmonies, just stacking one metaphor on top of another on top of another on top of another on top of another.

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**Igor:** Which brings us right back down to this idea of bottom-up change and how much more expansive it can be for someone and how we find it in a lot of music just by finding a nice piece of music that has a simple rhythm or a simple pattern and that pattern gets turned upside down, inside out, back to front, forwards and backwards.

It's the same idea represented in many different directions, kind of like the fuse again. That creates that richness around it that makes what is actually a simple little ditty actually very complex, sophisticated, and very appealing like you just don't want it to end.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** What other lessons? Do you have any music that can take us towards the more brain-oriented functions of what we're doing here?

**John:** Yes, I thought I would play a couple different things just for fun, just to round out the experience here. One is very much on the heels of the last one in terms of developing a number of themes, then having them ... really, what we were just talking about before, sort of stacking the harmonic stacking of metaphors and what happens with complexity when you do that.

This is just a very short piece but I think it's something that, especially if you're listening in headphones, you're going to notice it alters your state pretty immediately and obviously there's not going to be much of a lead-in.

This is actually a piece that would have built for a few minutes before we get to this piece, but I think it would give people another example of what it feels like to have both hemispheres firing at the same time, and I'll explain how I know that would be happening.

**Igor:** Okay.

**John:** You know, just what happens. Again, I think is just a 30-second sample. It's the one that's called 'Angels in Waiting'.

**Igor:** Okay, 'Angels in Waiting' I like that title.

**John:** If you really want to know what that title has to do with it, you've really got to listen to the very end of this piece, and unfortunately the samples is a bit low.

Talk about an open loop and a shameless plug for Psychotropic Grooves, but I thought this was really the one that was most relevant, and it just happens to be that is the title.

**Igor:** Perfect. We'll talk about that more later on. For now, let's just go and play the 'Angels in Waiting' track.

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**John:** Okay, here we go.

### [Music Track]

**Igor:** We're back. I found that very interesting. Again, that's a slightly different effect than the other one because it sounds like there is too many melodies or two things looking for my attention, one towards the left and one towards the right. They are both trying to simultaneously grab my attention in shall we say equally strong ways.

It's like my mind is splitting in two ways and it wants to listen to a performance over here, and it wants to listen to a performance over there at the same time, and eventually that conflict for me at least got resolved in that I heard that main thrum in the middle, and that became back.

It basically reminded me of the whole peripheral vision exercise and the little tinkling sounds in the corners became sometimes when you do the peripheral vision exercise we'll have people in the corners just waving their hands or just fluttering so that you get that fluttering effect in the corner of your eyes.

It kind of opened me up eventually to peripheral vision so I could have both concerts going on at the same time without my attention being divided.

**John:** That's a great explanation. I had mentioned before we played this that I'd say how I know it's activating both parts of the brain; part of what you're doing is, is your sending something different in each ear. Each ear is wired to a different hemisphere. That's the one way that we go about doing that.

What makes this one sort of, for me at least, funky and that stretch there goes on a good bit longer so that there's a little bit more of an entrainment effect that happens, but believe it or not, the melody that you hear on the one side.

Let's say it's panned to the left, is the same one that's panned to the right, but was I did was I added delay so it's coming in about two measures after the one is completed, so you're actually hearing the same thing in both ears, but one is delayed.

Then what I'm doing is both of them are panned all the way, so this is why headphones are so important, you're hearing the one just on the left and you're hearing the other on the right.

Then what I'm doing is you would imagine is I'm slowly cross-fading them so the one that's on the right is moving across to the one on the left. The one on the left is moving across and ending up exclusively in the right channel then.

In the meantime, what's happening because there's delay and they're both written in the same key, it starts to create these other kinds of little cycles inside of those two main ones that you're hearing.

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**Igor:** This kind of reminds me a bit of a double induction where two hypnotists are talking at pretty much the same time or sometimes slightly out of rhythm and it's almost like you have three hypnotists.

It's what the one hypnotist is suggesting, or the other hypnotist is suggesting, and you'll end up picking half a phrase from one and half a phrase from the other and your mind is combining them to cope with a completely new suggestion that neither of them ever intended or created in the first place.

**John:** Exactly. That's exactly what I had in mind. That was exactly where I was at with the whole metaphor there is playing with that whole idea that you can listen to one, you can listen to the other. They can seem like they are the same.

You'd be right if you thought that, but most people aren't going to think that, and at the same time it creates this open field again, in this case, more of an auditory Rorschach.

In hypnosis it would be auditory also but with words where the person is hearing these different phrases and depending on when each hypnotist is pausing, it creates a context for what they hear next from the other hypnotist and they can pick one word. They can pick a cluster of words and they basically create their own collage if you will that's related to whatever the changes they want to make.

**Igor:** Fantastic. It goes right back to our starting theme or guiding theme which is listen to any music, and as long as it has an impact on you, it will teach you how to construct better hypnotic experiences because you can map across any musical experience into a hypnotic one.

You just have to think through the elements, the suggestions you're using, the rhythms you're using, the context you place it all in and so on.

**John:** Right. Well said.

**Igor:** Thank you very much. Before we begin to listen to the next piece of music, I know this is going in a different direction to what we've heard so it's going to sound different, but really this final piece of music that we're going to talk about as the final music/voice combo shall we say, is going to be an amalgamation.

It's going to be an integration of all the themes that have been coming out during the course of this interview seminar, right.

**John:** That's right. I thought this would be fun, because up to this point as we've been music as a metaphor for the most part we have been talking about just music, in other words, instrumental. We've just been playing instrumental samples.

Again, one way that we know for sure that we're going to engage both hemispheres and why music is so powerful, is number one you're going to be engaging the subdominant hemisphere which listens for tone and pitch and

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things like that, more spatial relations, and we know that that's activated as soon as a person starts to listen but then the other side of course is if you're adding words which in regular music would be lyrics.

We're going to do something a little bit different here. If you're using words, a hypnotic induction that particularly have ambiguity with them, now you're again lighting up the dominant and again the subdominant hemisphere.

The idea is what we're really trying to do is just light up so much more of the person's nervous system than what they normally are that that's what creates all the additional possibilities that they might want to have to solve a problem or resolve an issue.

**Igor:** Right. So this is another example of how to be able to use language, to transcend language at the same time which is kind of the paradox that we have as hypnotists.

**John:** Exactly. One of the simplest ways that I fell in love with this is my thing if you want to know the truth. Many years ago; I guess it was probably in the mid 90s, probably around then; I really got onto this idea of what I now call hypnotic looping.

The idea is to have a very simple phrase. It could be a sentence, maybe two at the most, that is loaded with words that have all different kinds of ambiguity in them. You repeat that phrase, almost if you want to think of row, row, row, your boat like around, you're going to keep doing that over and over and over again.

Then you let somebody else jump in about halfway through and they are going to be saying the same kind of thing, just like you were listening to two melodies in the last musical piece were exactly the same but they were offset.

This is the same idea. The linguistic principle behind it is called a Markov chain which – I won't get into the whole history of the model – but essentially the idea was that when you listen to a word in a sentence very often a word, if you pause it creates the context for the next words that you're going to say. In other words, it sort of crates a bigger frame or an orientation point for the next word.

For example, if I say you're/your learning, saying you're/your learning, first of all the "you're" could be you are or it could be the learning that you possess, so there's a certain ambiguity there.

If I say you're/your learning processes – so am I referring to that my learning that I'm experiencing is process over time, or am I referring to this concept or this idea called a learning process? Depending on if I say you're/your learning processes inside, is going to feel a little bit different than you're/your learning processes, inside.

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The idea is you're using the things that we've talked about really this whole little piece, our whole discussion here where now, wherever you put the pause it actually is going to change the level of meaning that you're inviting the person to hear.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** Now imagine one person can do that; that's going to create a certain level of ambiguity, but what if another person's doing it with the same phrase, and what if the words are so ambiguous that you create this other thing called a third message because now you have the combination of both cycles that are running just slightly offset from each other.

**Igor:** Which goes back to the idea of the double inductions where hypnotists give their suggestions but a third hypnotist, a meta-hypnotist emerges which is elements of both kind of combined by the unconscious. It would select what message it needs to hear.

**John:** Exactly. For me, musically what it reminds me of is when you keep one of those loops going that's sort of like the drum and the base in a standard musical group.

They keep this rhythm, they keep this thing going, and then you could either have somebody else play the same thing or you could have somebody else jamming and doing something else completely unrelated to that, and then you get that same kind of synergy again.

**Igor:** Right.

**John:** I've got an example here of where, to make it real simple, the message that you hear, this loop, it's about learning. It's the one I just started, is the same on each channel, it's just that they are picking up at different points and as you'll notice it starts off with just one voice, mainly because the idea is you want to develop that rhythm again.

You want to develop the repetition where the person starts to go okay, this is becoming predictable. Usually I would let the first loop go around at least once, once-and-a-half. You could even do it longer than that so the person goes oh; he's repeating the same thing.

But then, you start to throw in this other stuff and they go whoa, what just happened there. It's the same principle that we've really been talking about before was syncopating a rhythm.

**Igor:** So we want to set it. We're going to set a pattern in order to break it alter on for the effect that breaking patterns has.

**John:** Exactly. There's a little bit of hypnotic music that goes along with it too. So this is a learning loop and here we go ...

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### [Music Track]

**Igor:** Okay, so that was an interesting piece of music with of course now vocals introduced into the whole thing and that of course changes the whole equation because now we're paying less attention to the music and more to the words which is both an upside and a downside, right?

**John:** Exactly. Then you've just got to make sure if you want them to pay attention to the words that they're the words that you think are going to do the most good and not detract from what you're attempting to do.

Part of it is then to, for those folks out there that do use music when they are working with people as just part of the general practice, I know a lot of people like to do that, part of that also then is to realize okay, the whole idea of silence becomes much more important because it's like how can you use the music to fill up certain silences that's going to make other suggestions that you don't have to say verbally.

For example, I don't know that anybody would remember this but it was pretty purposeful on my part where I said you're/your learning processes and I stopped there, and there was sort of a little descending lick I was doing on the guitar that was sort of repetitive. Almost what I was trying to say is this is what your brain sounds like when it's processing and where I was panning it back and forth to create that.

The other side is, now that you've introduced the words, don't cancel out the effects of the music, start to think about how you can bring the best out of both and at different points sometimes the music might still be the foreground the words almost or the lingering part of the words, the background, and other times the words are probably more naturally going to be foreground and the music is going to be the background.

**Igor:** This is another way of using the pauses because now the pauses, the music takes over and implies meaning which compliments or even fulfills something of the words set up in the first place.

**John:** Exactly. Obviously there you could probably hear, it was just one voice there at the beginning, but just to add a little bit of spaciness I guess you would say I was still panning that back and forth.

But then, you probably noticed there was a part when the second voice came in, and then you start getting this combined level of meaning because at each point when one point leaves off, you're left with whatever that idea is and now another one comes in that's going to be unrelated to what you were getting accustomed to.

As I was saying, we're starting it like a round so that the second voice comes in roughly about halfway into that loop. Now there are combinations of words that



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you wouldn't have heard before because we're using that round convention or that round mechanism again that you might have heard when we were a kid when you heard row, row, row, your boat and then another group jumps in and another group jumps in. Again, that all came from music.

**Igor:** Again, that gives us more richness when it comes to be a hypnotist because now we're using the idea of rhythm and repetition and even rhyme to a certain extent to create a much richer experience.

It becomes more of a performance which the whole mind will absorb and light up with rather than just the simple suggestion which in itself is fine, that learning is natural is a great suggestion. On its own, it's perfectly fine, but when you have all these other things added around the, it becomes much more rich and meaningful as a result.

**John:** Exactly. Very much similar to what you were saying, the cycle as it keeps returning there is always that one really simple phrase, and again there's even some pauses there where the learning is natural, but this is sort of another example of how to imbed beliefs. The main way beliefs get imbedded are through just sheer repetition of experience is one way that it happens.

Again, a person is already in an altered state. They keep hearing this; learning is natural, learning is natural, learning is natural, and then there's all these other associations as you were talking about like with your pyramiding idea, there's all these other associations that you experience in between the simple phrase of learning is natural.

This is just another example. Hopefully what this will do for people, it's not really about necessarily copying what we're doing here, but more as an inspiration that it becomes a jumping off point which is really what hypnosis does, frankly, and hypnotic language is it creates these jumping off points.

Like my client that I had mentioned, Bob, where it's one door now opens 50 other doors. What we're really wanting to do is create these inductive experiences where one thought leads to a whole bigger thought or Igor's metaphor of bottom-up change as is if water bubbling up from the earth and creating first a stream and then a creek and then a river and then a large lake or a large body of water.

Then you have to stop and realize how large is the water table underneath all of those bodies of water to have supplied them?

It's that whole idea of starting this inductive thinking where the background just keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger, but you stay connected to all of that.

**Igor:** That's when you realize that you are a hell of a lot more than you ever possibly conceived and you have direct experience of it, too.

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**John:** Exactly, direct kinetic experience.

**Igor:** Which is really the most important kind. There's an old saying, *'To hear is to doubt, to see is to be deceived, but to feel is to believe.'*

**John:** That's nice.

**Igor:** How do we take this idea of the learning loop, which was a very nice piece of hypnotic, for lack of a better word maybe theatre or it's engaging many different levels?

- **How do we turn this into something practical that we can take principles, ideas, and even dare I say the crazy "t" word, techniques out of?**

**John:** Well, I think again, the main piece is that if you're working with a client the idea is, is there a theme that not necessarily one that you create; in this case, this was obviously one that we're creating but maybe you hear a client when they're in the middle of a big shift or some sort of important experience, and you hear them say something that could easily sound like a belief.

It's a statement that they're making. You go okay, that's great, let's reinforce that. Let's do something to really bump that up. The idea would be you'd have whatever that simple phrase is and then you'd start to look for ambiguities in that.

You start to look for is there another sentence or two that I can attach to that so that I could do ... and I used to do this a lot with people at the end of sessions.

I would just do it on the fly. I wouldn't take too much time doing it, but I would listen to a few of the words they said, I'd connect them all together, and what I would do then is do that as a way, as a final integration before if I was doing phone coaching, for example, before I'd hang up the phone that would sort of leave them with a generative process that's already starting.

That's just in a real practical application there.

**Igor:** For example, if a client came in with a sort of heavy depressed feeling and somewhere in the session he says you know, when you ask how are you feeling, it's starting to lighten up a bit.

Now you have a beautiful example of an ambiguous phrase that can be used in many different ways because you can say lighten up in your life, you might end up lightening up your whole body. Look at that. It's lighting up your whole neurology is lighting up right now.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** Don't be too surprised that it's not just your knowledge that lightens up; it might be that your pants size dropped a couple of degrees as you lighten up.

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**John:** Right. Again, you just create these ideas. As you lighten up, your life is changing. Narrowing down unwanted things to something that fits just right, as you lighten up, your life is changing and slimming down. Possibility is no longer needed.

You start to have ... I was changing a little bit there but basically that's the kind of stuff I would do on the fly and do that for maybe three or four minutes and then you start to realize that becomes a trance induction, not just an integration piece.

Maybe you talk to a client another week later and just out of the blue once you've done a little bit of work or maybe just as you're getting set up and you say and you may remember as you're lightening up your life ... and you go into that same loop and now what you have is you actually have not only what in NLP terms people would call installation but you also have something that is going to be, if you will, an induction inducer right there.

It's going to take the person right into trance because they are going to remember the last time you did it. It is purposely hypnotic anyway and now you start to use that as a segue in between other pieces of work that you're doing. There are so many possibilities in terms of how you can use this stuff.

**Igor:** Actually you're using the building blocks of his own reality which is why it's so much more personal. It's already being pyramided. It's come out of him or her so it has all this deep semantically packed meaning.

**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** Okay, let's pour everything we've just been doing together, because we basically, this happens a lot especially when you and I talk, John, we've gotten very inductive. We've gone in every possible direction. My mind feels like I'm one of those sci-fi films where one person splits into like 15 and they are running different directions to confuse everyone.

How do we take these 15 different directions we've been running in and bring them back together into a simple guiding theme which we started off from, which is basically how music is a great tool and how any field outside of hypnosis is a great tool for enhancing our understanding and skills as a hypnotist?

**John:** I think the first thing is really how we got onto this whole vein or this whole thread, if you will. Really, coming out of the first seminar we did in this series and that is one, find something that inspires you. Find something that is really outside perhaps in your mind completely unrelated to your study of hypnosis.

Continue being diligent in what you're learning with hypnosis and those similar kinds of things, but really start to cultivate some other things in your life that you do simply for the joy, just simply because you love whatever it is and that you can be equally as immersed in that, and to let those separate realities begin to

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grow and develop in the same way that that's happening for what your learning with hypnosis and NLP.

To me, that's the key piece of staying alive, and when I say alive I don't mean just breathing. I mean really being vibrant and being dynamic is continually putting yourself in those kinds of situations so what you're doing is fresh and it's new and you don't fall into that pattern of just repeating what you did and repeating what other people have done, even if it's effective.

I think it's worthwhile to be inspired to develop things that even though while you might know there's a way of working with a person for a phobia that's really effective, how much better would it be if you had four or five other ways of working rather than just that one?

**Igor:** What we're talking about here really is using the same processes we're trying to use with our client, which is confusing the conscious mind, then unleashing the unconscious mind to basically blast through the problems and create a richer life and doing that with ourselves. We're using inspiration. We're using the uncertainty.

**John:** Right. Then it's really, okay, now in this case with music, that's been a big inspiration for me. This was just the example we used here. All the different hypnotic principles and lessons I guess you'd say that can come out of it, the use of ambiguity, and the use of rhythm, repetition, repetition, and rhyme.

The idea of creating and changing states and creating an emotional rollercoaster, and the idea of tension, release and what that does to a nervous system to create what we've been calling bottom-up change or bottom-up neuroplasticity.

Then of course, the idea of bringing language back into it as we did at the end to how can you now start to marry together music in a very obvious way with words and create something that's a synergy of both.

Obviously, you wouldn't even have to have music to do some of the looping we did, but all of that came inspired using these ideas that we're talking about. Obviously, the ambiguity and the pause is a really important part of that technique.

**Igor:** So again, what we're talking about now is find a field that will dominate or fascinate your ideas and understandings with a real passion, and then the analogies to hypnosis will start coming out naturally over time, especially if you keep thinking about how does this teach me or what does this teach me as a hypnotist, as a person, as a human being, as a communicator and so forth.

As those bridges build, I think we can pretty much safely say that today's session has shown how a simple idea like music can run amuck in so many different ways and teach us some very important fundamental principles in

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hypnosis. If music can do that, than math can do it, then the sciences can do it, then horticulture can do it, then paper folding can do it.

Everything has something to offer perspective and idea, something which is key to that discipline, which when you look at hypnosis again will be just as important as hypnosis, only it's understated hypnosis and now elevated to a new position where you can see it more clearly.

**John:** Remember, throughout the entire process that learning is natural.

**Igor:** Because you're learning processes inside.

**John:** While you rest.

**Igor:** And rest

**John:** Your unconscious

**Igor:** Can pay attention.

**John:** Learning is natural.

**Igor:** To what is important.

**John:** You're learning.

**Igor:** Already.

**John:** Processes.

**Igor:** You are.

**John:** Inside.

**Igor:** Learning.

**John:** As you rest.

**Igor:** Is natural.

**John:** And the rest.

**Igor:** You're learning.

**John:** You're unconscious.

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**John:** Will pay attention.

**Igor:** While you rest.

**John:** To what?

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**Igor:** And rest.

**John:** Is important.

**Igor:** You're unconscious.

**John:** Already.

**Igor:** Pay attention.

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**Igor:** Inside.

**John:** Will pay attention.

**Igor:** While you.

**John:** What is important already, learning?

**Igor:** Rest.

**John:** Is natural.

**Igor:** And the rest.

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**John:** You're learning.

**Igor:** Your unconscious.

**John:** Processes.

**Igor:** Pay.

**John:** Inside.

**Igor:** Attention to what?

**John:** While you rest.

**Igor:** Is important

**John:** And the rest? You're unconscious.

**Igor:** Already you are.

**John:** Pay attention.

**Igor:** Learning is natural.

**John:** To what is?

**Igor:** You're learning.

**John:** Important already.

**Igor:** Processes inside while.

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**Igor:** Pay attention.

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**John:** Inside.

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**Igor:** Already.

**John:** While you rest.

**Igor:** You are learning.

**John:** And the rest you're unconscious.

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**John:** Will pay attention.

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**John:** Pay attention.

**Igor:** You're learning.

**John:** To what is important.

**Igor:** Processes.

**John:** Already.

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**John:** You are.

**Igor:** While you rest and.

**John:** Learning.

**Igor:** To rest.

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**John:** Processes.

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**Igor:** Already.

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**Igor:** You.

**John:** Will.

**Igor:** Are learning.

**John:** Pay attention.

**Igor:** Is natural.

**John:** To what is important already.

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**Igor:** You're learning processes.

**John:** Learning.

**Igor:** Inside while you.

**John:** Is natural.

**Igor:** Rest.

**John:** Learning.

**Igor:** And rest.

**John:** You're learning processes.

**Igor:** You're unconscious.

**John:** Learning.

**Igor:** Will pay.

**John:** Is natural.

**Igor:** Attention to what is.

**John:** You're learning.

**Igor:** Important already.

**John:** Is natural.

**Igor:** You.

**John:** Are learning is natural.

**Igor:** Are.

**John:** Learning is natural.

**Igor:** Learning.

**John:** Is.

**Igor:** Natural now.

**John:** There we go, buddy.

**Igor:** So might one say that that is a combination of how music and rhythm and syncopated rhythms and pauses and the emotional rollercoaster and ambiguous meanings attach together in different ways, how all these musical themes that we've been talking about can fit into a simple hypnotic induction that actually has no novelty in it.

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**John:** Exactly.

**Igor:** Because really, it should be very dull.

**John:** Exactly. If they're not sure about all those themes that we've been talking about Igor, I think that they probably need to just listen to the induction again to make sure.

**Igor:** So they realize that learning is natural.

**John:** Exactly. Without even listening for what all the other themes are that are happening outside of their awareness.

**Igor:** Because learning is natural.

**John:** How could they know what are all those other ideas that they've gotten from the process that they've not yet discovered until later.

**Igor:** Because all they remember is that learning is natural.

**John:** Which is probably the easiest way to go for now.

**Igor:** I think so. It's the more natural way to do it.

**John:** Yes.

**Igor:** John, as always, it's been a real pleasure. What can I say? I don't know about everyone else listening, but I've been on an emotional rollercoaster, and intellectual rollercoaster, and I've had lot of fun.

**John:** Me too, Igor. It's a blast, man. I hope we do it again sometime. It's just fine. If folks ever saw the minimum amount of information that we have to really go on and if they saw where the whole thing went, that in and of itself would be testing it to what we've been talking about this whole last interview.

It's really a dual light and I think what you got here was not just Igor who's just brilliant in his own way or just me, but what you got was a synergy that neither one of us could have created by ourselves.

**Igor:** So we have the Igor and John Markov team.

**John:** There you go! Has a nice Russian ring to it.

**Igor:** It does, doesn't it? Just to wrap everything up here, first of all John, I want to really thank you so much for first of all taking part in these interviews in eh first place, secondly for really going to town on this one because we've spent a lot longer in here than is usual, but why stop a pig in mud when he's rolling quite happily?

**John:** There we go oink-oink.

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**Igor:** I'm oinking with the best of them believe me. I just want to remind everyone that we've listened to some tracks and pieces of music; this is something that you do a lot of know just because it's fun for you. I know you do a lot of teaching and stuff like that.

For those who are interested, the music we were listening to today were just small excerpts from a whole album you have called Psychotropic Grooves. They can find that on your website, [JohnOverdurf.com](http://JohnOverdurf.com). The album again is called Psychotropic Grooves.

In terms of the general theme that we've been running through the course of these last seminars, the last one and this one is the idea that we're going to thrive through our uncertainties. Not uncertainty that's in the way of thriving; it's our process of thriving even further.

You've got a very nice little teleclass, mini-seminar on that theme called Thriving Through Uncertainty which I believe you'll be offering at a special rate, so anyone who wants to contact John and let him know that you listened to these seminars, these interviews, he'll make that available to you at a special rate. Again, you'll find all his contact details on [JohnOverdurf.com](http://JohnOverdurf.com).

Finally, we have those people who want to feel or get in touch with a little bit more of what John does on a perhaps slightly more linear way but even so, linear is a very relative term at this stage, the TCU, Telecoaching U classes, which again you'll find more details of on your website.

These are basically weekly coaching lessons where you'll teach a principle, you'll get a chance to coach someone else using these principles, and you'll have a question and answer session where you get a chance to ask questions about that particular principle or the coaching session or anything in between.

It's a fantastic thing to cut your teeth on. You can get listening to good coaches using this stuff. You can have mind-expanding concepts and believe me; they're mind-expanding. If there is anything that ever arises within a TCU class that you are familiar with in any kind of in-depth way, then I can quietly say ask for your money back because it's not going to happen.

It goes into all kinds of different directions, they're all as inspiring and just great brain food, and food for thought as hopefully this class has been. We're trying to recreate some of the spirit of that here and of course just tease out of John his personality.

There are few people that we can come up with a five-word synopsis and end up spending two or three hours using rifting off that and creating some really valuable hypnotic contents both in terms of how today's interview has been structured and in terms of how the information has come out, where it's come from, and also the actual content. They are all different layers of exactly the same cake.

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John, I've got to say thank you so much for sharing your insights, your knowledge, just your fun spirit and in the same time is helping up becoming better hypnotists. I really learned a lot, I really enjoyed it, and I'm sure everyone listening has done the same.

**John:** Well, thank you, Igor. It really has been way beyond just a pleasure and a delight, that's for sure. I'm sure I can look forward to lots of new insights that have just come out of this conversation and like every other time when we have conversations that seems to be the way it goes.

For those of you that have studied with Igor or who are studying with him, I'm telling you, if you didn't get an idea in terms of just how he ran the interview how much he knows and how dedicated he is and how much passion he is and just a good guy who's just really moving forward and strongly evolving, then I'd say you ought to listen to this whole program a few more times so that you do know that.

**Igor:** Thank you for that, John. I really do appreciate this.

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### **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 John Overdurf from [JohnOverdurf.com](http://JohnOverdurf.com). My name is Igor Ledochowski from [StreetHypnosis.com](http://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 Programme. All his programmes are available from:

**[www.StreetHypnosis.com](http://www.StreetHypnosis.com)**