

Chapter 1: WHAT IS HYPNOTHERAPY?

Hypnosis is a term used to describe a process that creates a non-ordinary state of consciousness. This state of consciousness allows clients to respond to suggestion with higher than normal receptivity. Hypnotic consciousness is a state that can spontaneously come about for a person, or it is a state that can be self-induced or induced with the help of a facilitator or hypnotherapist. All hypnosis is self-hypnosis because the hypnotic state of consciousness is generated within the hypnotee. The hypnotee allows herself to actively engage in the process. In some situations, the hypnotee may even choose to not respond. Experiencing the hypnotic state is a skill that can be learned and cultivated.

Hypnotherapy is the practice of therapy that takes place in the non-ordinary state of hypnotic consciousness. Hypnotherapy directly engages the client's conscious and subconscious mind in the process of doing therapy. The hypnotherapy process is usually interactive and involves verbal and non-verbal communications between the client and hypnotherapist while the client is in the non-ordinary state of consciousness. Most therapeutic work is greatly enhanced while clients are in a hypnotic state because they are able to access information, healing, creativity, memories and insight that is not normally available when in the waking conscious state. Change is facilitated from within the clients in hypnotherapy; it is inwardly generated and intrinsic to the clients, themselves. The hypnotherapist is responsible for having the tools and skills to assist the clients in

helping themselves, which minimizes the often incorrectly perceived “power” the therapist has over the client.

By engaging a transpersonal or spiritual focus in hypnotherapy, the client’s personal transformation can be supported even further. By invoking and accessing the client’s higher Self or the wisest transcendent aspect of consciousness, clients are also able to access expanded states of consciousness similar to those experienced in meditation or in profound states of presence: states when the egoic or self-involved consciousness is transcended or simply out of the way. Through these transpersonal states of consciousness, healing and profound change can take place, often fairly effortlessly. Clients report that these expanded states of consciousness change them in lasting positive ways. Clients realize that, for instance, they have pain, but are not the pain. They can potentially experience themselves as spiritual in essence: as a spiritual being having a human experience of pain. From these hypnotically accessed transcendent states, clients begin to have a new sense of self and a new way of relating to the challenges of their lives. They become dis-identified from their stories and the previously perceived roles they have played in their lives. Their consciousness is expanded along with an expanded sense of Self.

HYPNOTHERAPY AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

I became a transpersonal psychotherapist because of my passion for work that engages people’s consciousness to promote change, healing, and transformation. As a client of hypnotherapy, a long-time practitioner of self-hypnosis, and as a hypnotherapist who has facilitated over 20,000 hypnotic sessions, I have years and years of experience of directly knowing the profound and lasting effects of hypnotherapeutic work. I have

discovered over and over that facilitating a transpersonal form of hypnotherapy is a mystical and spiritual practice for both the client and the hypnotherapist. In hypnotherapy we can learn to access and utilize expanded states of consciousness directly, at will, and for a variety of personal goals and purposes. The process of being in an expanded state is just as healing and significant in supporting change as is directing the state of consciousness towards a therapeutic personal goal or outcome.

For the client in the hypnotic state, accessing awareness of the higher Self becomes a profound teacher of how our consciousness works to create our realities. These hypnotic states also become vehicles through which we can re-create our realities. Additionally, the hypnotherapist is often in an expanded state of profound presence entrained and aligned with the client's state of consciousness. The art of guiding a client's process involves being so present that the hypnotherapist is out of her own way and accessing her own higher Self as the hypnotic guide. The practice of hypnotherapy, both as a client and as a hypnotherapist, then, becomes another form of spiritual practice that puts us directly in touch with our spiritual nature and how our consciousness creates the forms and structures of our lives.

In this book I will show how this spiritual awareness and presence can be cultivated as a spiritual practice by working with many of the energetic principles that are intrinsic to hypnotherapy. These principles and precepts are also naturally mirrored in Taoist philosophy. I will show how Taoist precepts are naturally intrinsic to working with hypnotherapy as a spiritual practice.

THE HIGHR SELF

Throughout the history of hypnosis, and since the first psychological theories of Sigmund Freud, we have understood that there are two aspects of consciousness that come into play in the hypnotic process: the conscious and the subconscious (or unconscious mind, as Jung referred to it). With the work of Roberto Assiogoli and the birth of transpersonal psychology, however, there emerged an acknowledgement of a third aspect of consciousness: the higher Self, or the transcendent aspect of consciousness.

The higher Self, a spiritual, wise, and infinite aspect of our consciousness, can be directly accessed and engaged as the inner therapist/healer in the hypnotherapy process. It is an aspect of human consciousness that goes beyond our waking, ordinary ego consciousness that embodies, presents, or can access certain wisdom not experienced in normal consciousness. (Alexander, 11)

Arthur Hastings, a professor of transpersonal psychology states:

...the higher Self is said to be a distinct part or function of the individual. It is an entity in itself, with consciousness or awareness like the ego, and it is assumed to be a part of everyone. It witnesses the person's experiences. It is non-punitive, objective, and non-judgmental. Its orientation is towards higher values, life purpose, healthy emotional and mental development, and spiritual qualities. (Hastings, 180)

Willis Harman believes that in all major religious and mystical traditions there is a parallel wisdom that is a necessary component of being human and is an impetus for the inner search of higher Self:

In studies of comparative religion it appears that, besides the many exoteric forms, there is within any of the major traditions an esoteric or “inner circle” form, which is essentially the same for all traditions. This “perennial wisdom” seems to recommend an inner search involving some sort of meditative or yogic discipline, and discovery and identification with, a “higher” or “true” Self.

(Harman, 34)

The perennial wisdom of the *Tao de Ching* is tremendously supportive of the practice of hypnotherapy and the evolution of consciousness that comes from doing hypnotic work.

The Tao never does anything,
yet through it all things are done.

If powerful men and women
could center themselves in it,
The whole world would be transformed
by itself, in its natural rhythms.
People would be content
with their simple lives,
in harmony, free of desire.

When there is no desire,
all things are at peace. (Mitchell, 37)

ACCESSING THE HIGHER SELF IN HYNOTHERAPY

Now that we understand the concept of the higher Self, how do we access it and utilize its resources in the hypnotherapy process? By directly invoking the higher Self

and by facilitating a technique of voice dialogue, the higher Self can become a resource for inner guidance and self- healing in the hypnotherapy process.

Learning to distinguish the higher Self from the egoic self is crucial when in hypnosis.

How does a client know which “voices” to listen to and which ones to trust? Many years ago a friend gave me a simple diagram, which follows, that categorizes the differences between the higher Self and the egoic consciousness. I have been unable to find the source of the diagram, but I know that it was created by author Rowena Pattee Kryder.

The diagram follows:

Diagram: THE REAL VOICE OF SPIRIT

If voices or thoughts other than your own seek your attention or try to come through you, use the following chart comparing energies from different levels as a guide before you decide to accept or reject what is happening.

LESSER MIND
The Voice of Ego
Personality Level

flatters
commands
demands
tests
chooses for you
imprisons
promotes dependency
intrudes
pushes
excludes
is status oriented
insists on obedience

often claims ultimate authority

offers short cuts
seeks personal gratification

GREATER MIND
The Voice of Spirit
Soul Level

informs
suggests
guides
nudges
leaves choices to you
empowers
promotes independence
respects
supports
includes
is free and open
encourages growth and
development
recognizes a greater power or
God
offers integration
affirms divine order along
with the good of the whole

By studying this diagram, and by becoming familiar with the different tone and qualities of the voice of ego and the voice of spirit, one has a tool with which to access the source of inner and outer guidance or teaching. With practice, we can know from which state the information or guidance is coming, and which guidance is empowering and supportive of our own highest good. Clarity and empowerment come from the practice of choosing the wisdom and guidance of the higher Self, as does a growing experience of knowing and accessing our intuition, our deepest inner wisdom. When we access the higher Self we are naturally in the flow of the Tao. "If powerful men and women could center themselves in it, The whole world would be transformed." (Mitchell, 37)

In the hypnotherapy session, the facilitator or hypnotherapist can ask the client's higher Self or voice of spirit to be the inner guide and director for the client. The hypnotherapist aligns with this part of the client through direct dialogue and verbal exchange. In self-hypnosis processes, the higher Self becomes the inner hypnotist. As an example, listen to the first CD recorded as a part of this dissertation project of a self-guided hypnotic process to meet with and dialogue with one's higher Self, enabling the reader to have a direct and personal experience of the impact of his or her own higher Self's wisdom and guidance.

Chapter 2: TAOISM AND HYPNOTHERAPY

As a student of many spiritual traditions and as a practitioner who combines spiritual practices while working with clients, I have observed that many of the tenets of Taoism are at play in the process of working with the higher Self in hypnotherapy. The proverbial Taoist concept of “going with the flow” lies at the heart of the hypnotherapy process I use with clients and teach to hypnotherapists. As I discuss specific Taoist concepts and show how they support, and at times determine, the structure and evolution of hypnotherapy sessions, I will weave in quotes from the *Tao de Ching* that illuminate the concepts.

It must also be stated that writing about Taoism is difficult and paradoxical because, as stated in the first line of book One in the *Tao de Ching*, “The Tao that can be told, is not the eternal Tao” (Feng, English, line 1). Words are too limiting in trying to capture the essence of the Tao; rather the Tao is to be lived and experienced. I have had years of learning about and living the Tao through the practice of presence in the non-ordinary and mystical states accessed in hypnotherapy. I will show how the practice of hypnotherapy brings to life the philosophy and spiritual practice of Taoism of “going with the flow” and how accessing the higher Self brings wisdom, healing and expansion of consciousness to both the client and the practitioner.

TAOIST PRINCIPLES IN HYPNOTHERAPY

As a student of the *Tao de Ching* and Taoism, and a student and teacher of a transpersonal form of hypnotherapy, I see many parallels of principles between Taoism and my practice of hypnotherapy. In this chapter I will weave in quotes from the *Tao de Ching* as I discuss ten different Taoist tenets and exemplify their principles in the context of my work. Most of these tenets are introduced in some form in the book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Taoism* by Brandon Toropov and Chad Hansen.

Taoist Principle :*Wu-wei*

A good traveler has no fixed plans
and is not intent upon arriving.
A good artist lets his intuition
lead him wherever it wants.
A good scientist has freed himself of concepts
and keeps his mind open to what is.

Thus the Master is available to all people
and doesn't reject anyone.
He is ready to use all situations
and doesn't waste anything.
This is called "embodying the light".

What is a good man but a bad man's teacher?
What is a bad man but a good man's job?
If you don't understand this, you will get lost,
however intelligent you are.
It is the great secret. (Mitchell, 27)

In a Taoist influenced form of spiritual hypnotherapy, the hypnotherapist works with *wu wei* and is like the good traveler or good artist written about in chapter 27 of the *Tao de Ching*. She has no fixed plans and allows her intuition to lead.

In hypnotherapy, *Wu-wei* is working with the energy, not against it, and allowing the process to unfold. *Wu wei* is the experience of non-doing or doing without trying. The goal of *wu wei* is to achieve a state of alignment with the Tao and a state of perfect equilibrium. In a practical sense, *wu wei* means knowing when to act and knowing when

not to act. This is an experience of being “out of our own way”. For example, in *wu-wei*, the dance dances the dancer, or we experience life living through us or our body breathing us. It is effortless efforting.

In an empowering and transpersonal form of hypnotherapy, the practice of *wu wei* or non doing is crucial. The non-doing comes into play by allowing the client space and time to access resources from “within”. The hypnotherapist supports and allows what is. Timing is of the essence. By asking interactive, open-ended questions and giving the client the opportunity to access and respond, even if the client’s response is to not respond, *wu-wei* is honored. The hypnotherapist and hypnotee are both sensitive to what is happening or not happening in the moment, and are both flowing with the unfolding process. The expanded state of consciousness accessed in hypnosis leads to an open-minded and open-hearted state. Out of this state of being present and open to the flow of what is, insights, creativity and knowingness emerge. Out of this openness one can also access the voice of Spirit which is very much like the “voice” or message of *wu wei*.

Pamela Ball in *The Essence of Tao* writes that:

....the solution to any problem is to stop trying to control events. If the will is resigned to the Tao – the greater scheme of things – the individual becomes an instrument of its eternal Way. This does not mean becoming passive and fatalistic but actually means becoming more involved in the wider issues of the physical plane. The ideal person (or Perfected Man) in operating in *wu wei* can act in three different ways; sometimes in only one; but more often in all three. These are:

1. Effortlessness
2. Responsiveness

3. Unobtrusiveness (Ball, 179)

A skilled hypnotherapist is constantly dancing with these three ways of responding to the client's emerging process. The hypnotherapeutic process emerges from the verbal and energetic dance that is co-created in the session, rather than the hypnotherapist superimposing a specific technique, her own style, or projected experience onto the client.

By doing without doing, the hypnotherapist allows the Tao to flow and with it comes healing, insight and empowerment. For both the client and the hypnotherapist, by doing less one can accomplish more. This approach to hypnotherapy is like engaging in a verbal and energetic form of Tai Chi.

Effortlessness:

The spiritual approach to hypnotherapy utilizes what already is by working with the client's language. The hypnotherapist will incorporate the client's phrasing, metaphors, and life perspective in the hypnotherapeutic process by joining the client wherever she is.

Clients report that they feel met, heard and understood when the hypnotherapist utilizes the reality and the language of the client as a starting point. As the therapeutic process and hypnotherapy journey evolves, the client's structure of reality is honored and then expanded as she is led to the therapeutic goal or desired state of being.

Responsiveness:

For the hypnotherapist, being present to the hypnotee's energetic, physical, and emotional shifts is imperative. The changes and movement the client makes while in trance are clues that subtly guide the hypnotherapist into the flow of the client's process.

Tears, deep breaths, subtle movements, quizzical expressions need to be acknowledged by the hypnotherapist. Inviting the client to share what is happening when these changes occur supports the hypnotherapist in guiding the hypnotherapy process. It is an act of following the client so the client can be led to where she wants to be. The hypnotherapist must pay attention in an open and receptive way by watching, listening, and feeling what is going on with the client in trance. Appropriate responses will naturally come with pacing and leading as *wu wei* is embodied in the hypnotherapy relationship and hypnosis process.

All streams flow to the sea
because it is lower than they are.
Humility gives it its power.

If you want to govern the people,
you must place yourself below them.
If you want to lead the people,
you must learn how to follow them.

The Master is above the people
and no one feels oppressed.
She goes ahead of the people,
and no one feels manipulated.
The whole world is grateful to her.
Because she competes with no one,
no one can compete with her. (Mitchell, 66)

Unobtrusiveness:

By joining the client, resistance is avoided. By using the client's language, rapport and ease are created. The hypnotherapist's skills are unobtrusive and subtle. The

hypnotherapist helps the client to help herself. The hypnotherapy process seems effortless and easy; there is nothing that can't be met, and nothing to come up against.

One example of responding to the client with unobtrusiveness comes up periodically in the context of a client feeling blocked or stuck and unable to respond or go further in the hypnotic process. Rather than colluding with the client by stopping the session, or giving up, the skilled facilitator has the client go into the block or stuckness. Thus, the facilitator unobtrusively joins with what is already there: resistance. In the unobtrusiveness of going with the client's resistance the block is often loosened and the client's process begins to flow.

The world is ruled by letting things take their course.
It cannot be ruled by interfering. (Feng, English, 48)

The Tao never does anything,
yet through it all things are done.

If powerful men and women
could center themselves in it,
the whole world could be transformed
by itself, in its natural rhythms.
People would be content
with their simple everyday lives,
in harmony and free of desire.

When there is no desire,
all things are at peace. (Mitchell, 37)

Taoist Principle : Trust in Nature as an organic pattern and our unity with it.

The ancient Masters were profound and subtle.
Their wisdom was unfathomable.
There is no way to describe it.
All we can describe is their appearance.

They were careful
 as someone crossing an iced-over stream.
 Alert as a warrior in enemy territory.
 Courteous as a guest.
 Fluid as melting ice.
 Shapable as a block of wood.
 Receptive as a valley.
 Clear as a glass of water.

Do you have the patience to wait
 till your mud settles and the water is clear?
 Can you remain unmoving
 till the right action arises by itself?

The Master doesn't seek fulfillment.
 Not seeking, not expecting,
 she is present, and can welcome all things. (Mitchell, 15)

Natural settings, nature metaphors and the elements are all used in the hypnotherapeutic process. Nature teaches, supports, and sustains us, and empowers the hypnotherapy process by bringing to awareness what the client already knows and uses in her daily life.

Commonly, in a hypnotherapy induction, the client will be invited to go to a healing and safe place in nature. As the client chooses and inwardly accesses the place, either from memory or from her imagination, she describes the surroundings. While invoking all of the inner senses: seeing with the inner eyes, feeling the emotions and physical sensations in the body, hearing with the inner ears and simply by knowing, while she focuses on the supporting effects of the natural surroundings. The hypnotherapist asks open-ended questions about the preferred place as a way to draw out and embellish the hypnotee's experience. Taoism relies on nature as a teacher and guide for being in the now. Nature is a pure expression of the Tao. We cannot name the Tao, but we can observe it all around us, in nature.

When in the natural setting in trance, working with the elements can be very supportive in many ways. Breathing in fresh air may support ongoing relaxation. Being in or by water may cleanse, soothe, and balance the body or the energy system. Feeling the sunlight on the skin may calm and relax the body tensions. Because the unconscious does not know the difference between the imagination through inner perceptions and the external physical experience of outer physical reality, the body responds to the nature images as if it is actually in nature. The body and mind respond to the inner images and experience of nature and benefit from this mental hypnotic natural retreat.

Therapeutic metaphors that focus on the natural elements and the patterns and seasons in nature and life can remind the client about her role in life as a part of the natural world. Birth, death, change of the seasons, all familiar to the client in her daily life, can be natural reminders to support a client going through her own losses or changes and remind her that she is a part of a greater whole. Change is the only constant; and embracing change by accepting what is, supports the client in being in the Tao.

A hypnotic metaphor that I created incorporates the story of a middle-aged woman who is adjusting to her sons leaving home for college. Her planting of a garden is a turning point for her in her healing and acceptance. Her experience of loss and grief is transformed by her relationship with the earth and her aligning with Mother Nature as she plants and tends the garden. The story reminds people facing change that there is always rebirth out of death, and that nature is a resource to support our understanding and acceptance of what is. The Tao surrounds us all in the form of nature. Reflect on nature to find enlightenment and healing.

Taoist Principle: Accessing Chi and the energy work of Hypnotherapy

If you open yourself to the Tao,
 you are at one with the Tao
 and you can embody it completely.
 If you open yourself to insight,
 you are at one with that insight
 and you can use it completely.
 If you open yourself to loss,
 you are at one with the loss
 and you can accept it completely.

Open yourself to the Tao,
 then trust your natural responses;
 and everything will fall into place. (Mitchell, 23)

The process of engaging in hypnotherapy is like a martial art. Both the hypnotherapist and the hypnotee are engaging in an energetic “battle” over resistance, blocks, misperceptions and limiting beliefs that create the hypnotee’s distorted perceptions of reality and limited expressions of Self. As with much of the Taoist paradoxical philosophy, the therapeutic “battle” is one of calling a truce. By working with the blocks and joining the energy of the client’s resistance, the blocks melt away. The life force or Chi is liberated for the client’s transformation in various ways. One of the most common is through abreaction: the emotional and physical release of blocked energy. When a client moves through a block, healing occurs.

It is common in regression therapy that by contacting the source of a dis-ease in one’s life, that the dis-ease releases completely. For example, a man with severe arthritis in his wrists hypnotically regresses to the source of the pain. He discovers that in a past life he is held by the head and wrists in the stocks in a town square for being a “witch” and healing people. She (in his past life) is humiliated and taunted by the townspeople for four days with no food or bathroom privileges. From this trauma, she decides that it is

unsafe to allow herself to use her knowledge and skills as a healer and she vows to never heal others again. In his present life, the man is a novelist and body worker who is healing others through his hands and his stories. As he becomes more visible to the public through his published novels and his flourishing massage business, the past life decision reactivates: it is unsafe to be visible as a healer and the energy is once again blocked in his wrists. This blocked energy in his wrists, which manifests as arthritis, is an echo of the trauma of his past life as a healer being held in the stocks. By accessing the memory and trauma, and by re-choosing to allow the healing to flow through him this current lifetime, his block is released and his arthritis is healed.

While the hypnotherapist is engaging in the therapeutic Tai Chi with the client, the client is also doing Tai Chi with different parts of herself that have been at odds with each other and creating an inner “battle” or block. When the Tao is accessed, the chi flows, and order is restored.

Center your country in the Tao
and evil will have no power.
Not that it isn't there,
but you will be able to step out of its way.
Give evil nothing to oppose
and it will disappear all by itself. (Mitchell, 60)

Taoist Principle: Yin/Yang: the balancing and integrating of opposites and the idea that all phenomena contain seeds of their counterparts.

All things have their backs to the female
and stand facing the male.
When male and female combine,
all things achieve harmony. (Mitchell, 42)

All of life, as it manifests on the physical plane, is a dance of opposites: male/female; birth/death; light/dark. When a client comes in for hypnotherapy the presenting issue almost always involves some imbalance of opposites in her life. The

focus of the work is to collapse any polarization, or identification with one side of the problem over the other. For some people the focus will be to bring in the Light by accessing resources, shifting or reframing perspectives, working towards empowerment or forgiveness, and accessing the Self and the voice of Spirit. For others, the work is to address and heal the Shadow, the darkness that is most often projected outwards onto others. This involves work with the victim part of the self, co-dependence, addictions, and all of our projected pain and unconscious behaviors and motivations. Until the battle of opposites is addressed, the inner battle continues. When a client moves towards balance of the yin and yang, peace and equanimity emerge and the client no longer magnetizes situations that keep the imbalances activated.

A great nation is like a great man:
 when he makes a mistake, he realizes it.
 Having realized it, he admits it.
 Having admitted it, he corrects it.
 He considers those who point out his faults
 are his most benevolent teachers.
 He thinks of his enemy
 as the shadow he himself casts. (Mitchell, 61)

The balancing of opposites is addressed most effectively through hypnotic regression therapy. For example, a client may present the issue of abuse as a long-time theme in her life. Through childhood regressions, the client is able to access a chain of present life events where the pattern is established and repeated. Unknowingly, the client perpetuates the abuse through her own unconscious mental, emotional and physical energetic field that attracts more and more abuse. The law of attraction is in place when an abused person radiates the unconscious message, "I am abused" to the world. When a client is ready to deal with the pattern and to look deeply into what the pattern is teaching her on a soul level, there is an opportunity to collapse the dynamic and to stop the pattern.

The collapsing, in my experience, comes when the client is willing to look at the shadow expression of the abuse: the role of being an abuser. This is when past life regression therapy is an effective approach.

I can share a personal experience that is a part of my own healing journey. I grew up with an alcoholic, physically abusive mother. Of her four daughters, I was the one she physically abused. I was angry and indignant when she was drunk and abusive. I was confrontational with her about her drinking and I often refused to do what she asked. I didn't want to be controlled by a drunk, abusive mother whom I did not respect. My responses activated an abuse cycle, and she would get even more angry and abusive with me. Until my mother went into recovery for her alcoholism, I truly felt hatred towards her.

In my early thirties, a few years before she died from liver cancer, I had an amazingly healing experience in which I understood my mother's focus on me as the outlet for the abuse. I spontaneously regressed into a past life during a hypnotherapy session. I experienced myself as a stepmother of a girl child whom I was physically abusing. I felt resentment and hatred towards this child and I was cruel and very abusive towards her. I experienced that I was beating her in a corner of a room so she could not escape my wrath. She cowered in fear and pain. When I looked into the child's eyes I recognized her as the soul of my mother. No wonder my mother was abusive towards me in my present life! She and I were in a karmic dance of balancing the abuser/ abused role in this lifetime. During this regression, I realized that I had the opportunity to forgive both myself and my mother for being abusive. It was my unconscious guilt and remorse for what I had done to my stepchild in the past life that attracted the karmic payback and balancing of the abuse from my present life mother. After the regression, my hatred for

my mother (which was in part my projected out hatred towards my own abusive self), collapsed. I saw my mother with understanding and compassion. I felt forgiveness for us both. I experienced that the abusive cycle ended between us and I was able to feel love. This was a true blessing for us both. In the last few years of her life we were able to heal many aspects of our relationship.

From my own personal experience and my years of work with past life therapy, I have seen many times that when we are polarized with specific dysfunctional dynamics, we have often had past life experiences in which we were living out the opposite role. Everything contains its own opposite. When we can see and own our own shadow aspects, we are no longer victimizing ourselves or magnetizing the opportunities to learn and balance the lessons over and over again. When the lessons are learned and the opposites are balanced, the dynamic is healed. In Taoism and in the human conditions which express polarized opposites, there is a fundamental and pervasive unity.

Ten thousand things carry yin and embrace yang.
They achieve harmony by combining these forces.
For one gains by losing
And loses by gaining. (Feng, English, 42)

Listen to the CD on Past Life Regressions for your own experience of past life effects on your present life.

Taoist Principle: Go with the flow. Be like water. Spontaneity and “right response” come from listening to the way things are.

The supreme good is like water,
Which nourishes all things without trying to.
It is content with the low places that people disdain,
Thus it is like the Tao.

In dwelling, live close to the ground.
In thinking, keep to the simple.

In conflict, be fair and generous.
 In governing, don't try to control.
 In work, do what you enjoy.
 In family life, be completely present.

When you are content to be simply yourself
 And don't compete or compare,
 Everybody will respect you. (Mitchell, 8)

When in hypnosis, a person can flow into her own deepest nature, into her true Self. Like water, the hypnotic process supports and allows one to sink to the depths of Self and nourish all things of the psyche. Consciousness expands as does access to the inner resources of creativity, memory, insight, and healing. The proverbial phrase “go with the flow” comes from this Taoist wisdom suggesting that we be like the pattern of water's natural action...that we flow with, rather than against, the natural expression of energy.

Like water, when we meet resistance, we conform to the obstacle and slowly and patiently go around it or incorporate it into our path.

In all the world, there is nothing more submissive and weak than water.
 Yet, for attacking that which is hard and strong, nothing can surpass it.
 (Toropov, Hansen, p. 133)

The most therapeutic and helpful guidance a hypnotherapist can provide a hypnotee is authentic, spontaneous and without an agenda. This support comes out of being present in the moment, and following the flow of the client's process. The appropriate response is always waiting to rise to the surface. As the guide we wait, listen, watch, and feel in order to be moved in the moment to know when to guide, when to be silent, and as to what to say and do. When we respond or move, it is from a place of stillness.

The principle of flowing like water is crucial to someone learning how to be a hypnotee. Where and when do we learn to allow, and to flow with what is? Unless one is a meditator or a student of martial arts, it is unlikely that “going with the flow” is a known experience to a person in Western culture. Learning self- hypnosis, or engaging in a hypnotherapeutic process, will teach the participant to allow what is, and how to flow like water. The hypnotherapist must understand and embody going with the flow in order to facilitate it with her clients.

In my experience of studying hypnosis, I know that most traditionally trained directive hypnotists do not practice the Taoist principle of flowing like water. This is why there are so many reports that not everyone can be hypnotized. The client is expected to match the style and approach of the hypnotist. And if she can’t respond, she can’t be hypnotized! When a Taoist “ flowing with what is” approach to hypnosis is facilitated, there is no resistance to overcome. The watery process goes around obstacles and any blocks in the way.

This is called the small dark light:
The soft, the weak prevail
Over the hard, the strong. (Le Guin, 36)

One of my favorite teachings that I share with my hypnotherapy students is that “nothing is something”. When a hypnotee reports that nothing is happening in the hypnotic process we support the client going into the nothingness. By going with the flow of the nothingness, something always arises. Usually the client’s state will deepen by allowing the nothingness to be okay and to be what it is. Certainly, having many experiences of allowing trains the client to know the state and experience of flow. Eventually the hypnotic experience carries over into one’s daily experiences; she can flow with her own life.

Taoist principle: Everything is cyclical, transient and changing. The only constant is change.

The Master acts without doing anything
and teaches without saying anything.
Things arise and she lets them come;
things disappear and she lets them go.
She has but doesn't possess,
acts but doesn't expect.
When her work is done, she forgets it.
That is why it lasts forever. (Mitchell, 2)

Many clients are dealing with the difficulties that come with change: changes that are forced on them because life circumstances change, and changes they choose. Stress increases when there is change, especially if we do not know how to trust and stay present. If we grieve for what was or could have been, or we constantly fantasize about what will come or could happen, we are out of the now. If we can stay present to what is in the moment, we alleviate fear and stress. Everything we need in the moment exists, even if we are taking our last breath.

Hypnotherapy is a phenomenal tool for helping people to get present and cope with change. Grief work is profoundly supportive in helping clients move hypnotically through the grieving process. Clients may need to communicate soul to soul with loved ones who have passed, or they may need to work on acceptance of their own losses whether they involve a job, youth, money, health, or the impending loss of one's own life. By accessing the voice of spirit and expanding their consciousness to be more in the flow of the now or Tao, the ego mind that wants to know and control takes a big step aside.

If you realize that all things change,
there is nothing you will try to hold on to.
If you aren't afraid of dying,

there is nothing you can't achieve.

Trying to control the future
is like trying to take the master's carpenter's place.
When you handle the carpenter's tools,
chances are that you will cut your hand. (Mitchell, 74)

To let go of control is, paradoxically, to gain control. The ego lets go and the higher Self takes over, allowing one to be fully in alignment with what is. When we begin to have a direct and personal experience of allowing and letting go, we realize the futility of trying to control. Who do we think we are to argue with the Tao?

The Tao gives birth to all beings,
nourishes them, maintains them,
cares for them, comforts them, protects them,
takes them back to itself,
creating without possessing,
acting without interfering.
That is why love of the Tao
is in the very nature of things. (Mitchell, 51)

Taoist principle: Return to the state of “uncarved wood” or the natural state.

The world is formed from the void,
like utensils from a block of wood.
The Masters know the utensils,
yet keep the block:
thus she can use all things. (Mitchell, 28)

Empty yourself of everything.
Let the mind rest at peace.
The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self watches their return.
They grow and flourish and then return to their source.
Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way of nature.
(Feng, English, 16)

Returning is the motion of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.
The ten thousand things are born of being.

Being is born of not being. (Feng, English, 40)

Becoming empty and being present in the now is the most important of all Taoist principles. It is through presence that one accesses the Tao, or the flow of what is. In hypnotherapy, presence is crucial for both the hypnotherapist and the hypnotee. It is out of presence that the healing and transformation takes place. Hypnosis is a practice and pathway to presence. In presence our consciousness expands.

Hypnotic consciousness allows a person to dis-identify with the egoic perceptions of self and move out of a limited experience of who we are. I worked with a woman who later became my student. She sought hypnotherapy for debilitating chronic physical pain. This woman was badly injured at work and had four surgeries as an attempt to repair structural damage to her upper body. Her life was a daily living hell of pain and limitations. She couldn't cook, drive, do dishes, shop, and she could barely dress herself because of her upper body damage. She was barely able to walk into my office. On a scale of 0 to 10, she lived at a constant pain level of 10.

In the first session of hypnotherapy she had, what, for her, was an amazing experience. By following a pain management process, she realized that she was not the pain. She experienced herself as the observer of the pain, the witness to what the body and emotions were expressing. She returned to the "uncarved wood" of her Self and her awareness. This experience was a turning point for her. She learned self-hypnosis and energy therapy techniques that she used for herself and her healing began. The anxiety, physical tightening up against the pain, and hopelessness she carried began to soften. As she softened, the energy began to flow and the pain subsided. Hypnotherapy helped her dis-identify from the pain.

Taoist principle: Interdependence: all things are a part of a unified field.

The Tao can't be perceived.
Smaller than an electron,
It contains uncountable galaxies. (Mitchell, 32)

Commonly people who alter their consciousness through hypnosis expand their psychic abilities. It is not unusual for a person to have clairvoyance, pre-cognition or telepathy when in a hypnotic state. Often, clients want to use hypnosis to develop their psychic abilities. And as a hypnotherapist I know from my own experience that my own intuitive and psychic abilities have developed through being in the expanded state I experience when guiding a client in hypnosis. I often have what is called “psychic rapport” with a client. I can, at times, experience telepathy. Sometimes I know where the client is in her experience, or what the client is experiencing before she verbalizes her experience. I also often feel what the client feels during a session. And conversely, at times clients will report the same experience. For instance, commonly, a client will say that she knew what I was going to say to her before I said it. While it is important to have healthy boundaries so that as the hypnotherapist is not bombarded by the emotional and psychic turmoil or debris released by the client, it is also an advantage to “know” what is going on with the client so the process can be skillfully guided in support of the client’s needs. Part of the art of being a grounded and compassionate hypnotherapist requires an ability to psychically merge and then to detach and observe at appropriate times.

Psychological and psychic co-dependence is disempowering for both the client and the hypnotherapist; but experiencing the unified field of connectedness and interdependence is very useful. When consciously accessing the unified field, the hypnotherapist can facilitate the session more easily and the client will feel understood, seen, and mirrored on all levels in the work. This interdependence creates phenomenal rapport and intimacy.

Compassion is more free-flowing. For the client, a feeling of not being alone is generated. Knowing that on a quantum level we are all one can dramatically alter one's experience of being a part of a greater whole.

For twenty-three years I have taught people how to use psychokinesis (PK) to bend spoons. Psychokinesis is the experience of affecting matter with, something other than physical force, or mind over matter. I learned years ago how to have "PK Parties" and at the graduation of HCH Institute hypnotherapy trainings, I facilitate for the graduates an experience of PK through a group induction to bend spoons. In my office I have a whole box of unusable spoons and forks which my students bent using PK. If a person can bend metal with her mind, just imagine what she can do in the area of self-healing or in generating world peace. By accessing the unified field, she can truly expand to know that she is a part of the bigger whole.

Taoist principle: The Law of Reversed Effect: to change anything, you must first accept it the way it is.

Paradox is paramount to Taoism and to healing as well. Through embracing opposites and moving into what is most feared and resisted, tension, pain, and fear soften and dissolve. A spiritual approach to working with physical and emotional pain and addictions in hypnotherapy exemplifies this paradox of the law of reversed effect.

Our Western scientific culture has high regard for the medical model. Typically, when someone is in pain, the symptoms are treated with pain medications. The pain symptoms are masked to diminish suffering. In the work of hypnotherapy, however, when working with a client experiencing pain, the focus is to go into the pain, into what is usually avoided and resisted. I have assisted hundreds of chronic pain sufferers to melt

the pain and move into a state of liberation from chronic pain simply by teaching them to go with it, and to experience it fully through new expanded perceptions. All of the muscular constriction and energetic blocking of the body life force energy is freed up and begins to flow again while working with these pain management approaches. Often the client becomes pain free.

For Western minds, going into the pain is counter-intuitive. We have been socially hypnotized to block and avoid pain, and to fear it. To witness a chronic pain sufferer move into what has been avoided for a long time is miraculous and liberating. Clients become one with it, transform it, and let it go from the inside out, without medications, side effects or a need to re-medicate. Chronic pain sufferers discover that they are not the pain. They access a witness consciousness and let go of the identification with the pain.

Not knowing is true knowledge.
 Presuming to know is a disease.
 First realize that you are sick;
 Then you can move towards health.

The Master is her own physician.
 She has healed herself of all knowing.
 Thus she is truly whole. (Mitchell, 71)

If you want to shrink something,
 first you must allow it to expand.
 If you want to get rid of something,
 first you must allow it to flourish.
 If you want to take something,
 you must first allow it to be given.
 This is called the subtle perception
 of the way things are.

The soft overcomes the hard.
 The slow overcomes the fast.
 Let your workings remain a mystery.
 Just show people the results. (Mitchell, 36)

Hypnotherapy, then, supports the shrinking of the pain by first allowing it to expand.

Give evil nothing to oppose,
and it will disappear by itself. (Mitchell, 60)

The Master never reaches for the great;
thus she achieves greatness.
When she runs into a difficulty,
she stops and gives herself to it,
She doesn't cling to her own comfort;
thus problems are not problems for her. (Mitchell, 63)

This law of reverse effect is also at play when working with addictions. Before a person can work with her addictions, she must first of all accept that she is addicted and has no control over the addictive substance or behavior. The way to change anything is to first of all accept it the way it is.

A hypnotherapy approach to addictions is to support the client in accessing the feelings, needs and compulsions underneath the addictions. Almost always it is anxiety. By going into the anxiety, the anxiety begins to change. The anxiety that the addiction has been covering or managing is addressed head on. As one knows first hand what has been avoided, it transforms. The client begins to have a tool to manage the anxiety and a chance to have a choice about behaviors. The driving need behind the addiction or compulsion is addressed directly and transformed.

I work with people who are ready to quit smoking. The hypnotherapeutic approach I use addresses what motivates the smoker part to breathe smoke. I help the client to know consciously what the smoking part has unconsciously been trying to do for

the client by smoking. The needs become conscious and then the client's higher Self is engaged to find other life-affirming ways to meet the needs. Once the needs are truly met, and met well and lovingly, the client is able to let go of the addiction, and do the other behaviors instead. The client becomes an air breather.

Taoist principle: Emptiness, non-doing.

Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub
 It is the center hole that makes it useful.
 Shape clay into a vessel;
 It is the space within that makes it useful.
 Cut doors and windows for a room;
 it is the holes which make it useful.
 Therefore profit comes from what is there;
 usefulness from what it not there. (Feng, English, 11)

Sometimes the core of a client's issue is how to be a "human-being", rather than a "human-doing". Hypnotherapy can have many of the same effects as meditation.

Hypnotic consciousness may be utilized, for instance, simply to know the state of Being, to directly experience that the source of all thought and action is the pregnant "nothing" from which "doing" is born. When a highly stressed "human-doing" comes in for help with symptoms of anxiety, sleeplessness, or compulsive behaviors, hypnotherapy collapses the compulsive patterns of having to constantly "do". A person can finally have a skill that allows the experience of being and nothingness, a skill that is not a part of our Western culture's conditioning.

Thus, the principles of Taoism join the heart of us being hypnotherapists, reminding us of how to do without doing, to be present with the client in ways that empower, to promote wisdom and healing through going with the resistance, and to honor that the client has her own capacity to heal herself.

Chapter 3: Hypnotherapy as a Spiritual Path.

In one class at Wisdom University, while undertaking my doctorate studies, “The Reinvention of Work” I studied about a paradigm shift that is occurring in the work world: that our work can be our ministry. The practice of spiritual hypnotherapy is not only a ministry; it is also a spiritual practice that promotes the expansion of consciousness of the practitioner as well as of the client.

A study conducted in the field of past life therapy in 1989, using a device developed by C. Maxwell Cade called a Mind Mirror (Cade and Coxhead, 1979), exemplifies the matching of therapist and client brainwaves in a non-ordinary state induced through hypnosis while accessing past life information. This study done by Winifred Lucas, Ph.D., and her colleagues at the Brentwood Psychological Center, used two Mind Mirror devices simultaneously, one connected to the client and one to the regression therapist. The Mind Mirror measures the brain waves of both the right and left brains of the subject simultaneously, between 1.5 and 40 hertz, and responds rapidly to changes in frequency.

In Lucas’ experiment, the three therapists who guided the regression sessions and the nine individually hypnotized non-meditator subjects who had little training in non-ordinary states, showed a distinctive brain wave pattern of primarily beta and delta. These patterns are different from the patterns typical in the waking, dreaming or meditation states. The subjects GSRs (Galvanic Skin Response which measures sweating and levels of anxiety) fluctuated appropriately according to the events they related in their past-lives. Lucas reported that the two subjects who meditated exhibited brain waves that were different from the other nine subjects, and that they were typical of other meditators even while in hypnosis. Also, their reports of past lives, even during

traumatic events, tended to be less emotional. The GSR of these long time meditating subjects fell to a low level throughout the regression and remained there. And the brain waves of the meditators remained stationary and didn't fluctuate. (Thelma Freedman, p. 28, 2000)

Most interesting to me is that the brainwaves of the hypnotherapists doing the regression and the nine clients experiencing dramatic` past-life reports are the same: beta and delta. The therapists and the clients have brain wave rapport as they enter and work in the non-ordinary state simultaneously. When in the state of hypnotic consciousness, there is a psychic and energetic rapport between the hypnotherapist and client that can be measured through brain waves.

In my experience, that same type of psychic rapport that Lucas measured in the Mind Mirror experiment commonly takes place between the client and hypnotherapist. The following interviews of HCH graduates who now practice hypnotherapy show examples of this psychic rapport and mutual transformation.

Chapter 4: INTERVIEWS: TRANSFORMED HYPNOTHERAPISTS WHO ARE TRANSFORMING CONSCIOUSNESS.

In the excerpts of the interviews that follow, I will show how graduates of HCH Institute have had life-changing experiences and major shifts of perceptions and consciousness simply by guiding others in hypnotherapeutic work. Hypnotherapists working with the empowering and client-centered Taoist principles discussed in the previous chapter all agree that their consciousness, in some way, joins the consciousness of their client; that their consciousnesses are united with the client's in a quantum field of thought, being, and energy. Even though these hypnotherapists and hypnotees use many of the Taoist precepts in this dissertation, they don't necessarily work overtly with the Taoist language or concepts. These Taoist principles are universal principles that can be understood from many different systems or spiritual paradigms. The Taoist concepts are intrinsically a part of the empowerment and transpersonal style of hypnotherapy.

Because what follows in the interview chapter of this dissertation consists of direct quotations from the interviewees, for ease of reading the interviews, I have chosen to double space, rather than single space, the quotations. The hypnotherapists interviewed were each asked the same questions which are listed in Appendix B. When appropriate, the hypnotherapists were also asked questions from Appendix C about being a client of hypnotherapy. Four of the five interviews were conducted in person, audio taped, and then transcribed. One hypnotherapist responded to the interview questions in writing. I have taken editorial liberties in editing some of the grammar, and vernacular phrasing of the responses so that the interviews are more readable and cohesive. Each of the hypnotherapists has reviewed the following interviews for accuracy in content.

Rick Reynolds. CCHT,

Rick Reynolds, an HCH graduate of 2003, is now a teacher at HCH who is making significant contributions to the curriculum and to our community. He came into the field of hypnotherapy on the tails of his parents who graduated from HCH a month before Rick began his classes. His parents gifted the training to him hoping that he would get a kick-start into the next phase of his life. Rick had been a successful TV news producer and News Director for many years, and then he transitioned into being an entrepreneur who successfully launched a catering business with his life partner. Rick wondered what his next phase of work was going to be. He was thinking about counseling. Rick initially took the training for personal growth and remembers the first day of class how much fun it was to hypnotize others. Rick used to play with hypnosis as a kid by guiding his friends into past lives.

During the six-week summer intensive training, Rick launched his private practice and then worked with clients at HCH for six months in the low-fee hypnotherapy clinic while he did his clinical training. He was a natural.

Rick currently has a private practice in Sacramento and on site at HCH. His full-time work is as a hypnotherapist, a life coach and energy healer. He teaches in the basic hypnotherapy training and teaches a six-month course he created to mentor and assist graduates in creating and growing their private practices.

I asked Rick about how hypnotherapy has changed his life and his experience of himself:

It has been pretty profound. I have always been a pretty accepting person and not a very judgmental person, but I am even more accepting now. I can just sit with people and let them be themselves no matter how they are being, including when they are dying. It was profound to work with someone through a death

experience. I was with both of my grandmothers when they died, up close until the very end. I was resisting the death process and I wasn't okay with them dying. I thought I was okay with their deaths, but emotionally I wasn't.

Then, I did death and dying work, working with someone I went through the training with. In the training we had total permission to be ourselves. I had given my client total permission to be herself throughout the training and throughout her process of dying. It felt completely natural to give her support and permission to be dying and to die. I didn't resist her death or my feelings about it within myself, so I could create non-judgment and support of what was going on with her. It felt great. I got to see the beauty of death and how it fits in seamlessly and is a part of what is and what happens. I learned we don't have to resist death.

Rick exemplifies that "going with what is", is a key to acceptance and healing. Even healing into death! When I asked Rick if doing hypnotherapy has affected his view of death and his sense of Self, he responds:

Hypnotherapy has affected my view of death, especially by doing past life regressions. I feel more expanded in my understanding of death. I had an intellectual understanding about my transcending this life, but experiencing death in my own past-life regressions and witnessing deaths in regressions with clients brings me into an emotional understanding of death.

As for my daily life, I am still an introvert and that is OK. I enjoy that I am more accepting of myself being an introvert, so by embracing my introversion, I am more willing to put myself out there...and be less introverted. It is OK to just be

introverted. I think, “Well then, I don’t *need* to be introverted right now.” And in that moment, I am not limited to being introverted.

I am more willing to engage other people, even groups of strangers. For example, my talking to my next-door neighbor the summer I took the hypnotherapy training. He picked up my new comfort level right away. He said to my partner, “You know I have lived next door to Rick for ten years and I feel like I know him better this summer than I ever have. What’s going on with him?” I feel comfortable most of the time. In the past I was very uncomfortable. I may have had a desire to teach and share things but I couldn’t see myself doing it. In my news career, I had to lead the newsroom. In the newsroom meetings I had to get the entire newsroom together and talk with people and it was very difficult for me. There was nothing I hated more than standing up and speaking in front of all of them. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the worst, my anxiety was a 10. And since I have taken the training, and have been working with clients and teaching, getting up in front of people is the easiest and most fun part of my job. Now I really enjoy it. Now my anxiety is a 0 when I teach at HCH and a 3 to 5 when I am in front of other groups.

Rick has evolved to not only acknowledge his own resistances in life, but also he has reached the place where he accepts and even relishes how resistance creates new openings for change.

Doing this work, my patience, ability to trust, my compassion, acceptance, and ability to love have all increased. I felt a shift during the training and maybe

through the teaching as well. I have come to a place where I embrace resistance and shift to a place of being excited when the client is resistant. This has spilled over into my life. When things aren't working the way I want, that sense of excitement begins to come in. I think, "Whoa. This is going to be interesting." This anticipatory excitement is even more pronounced now.

I am still growing. Part of the process is to recognize that you are always going to grow. My work with clients has evolved. And it may be as much from the teaching as from the clients. The more confidence I have, the more I witness the healing working. The more I see it working, the more success my clients and I have. The more it is working, the less doubt I bring into the session and the less doubt the client picks up on. Their doubts go away if I am really confident and they think the hypnotherapy process is going to work. Clients want their therapist to be confident.

Rick has learned the power of going with the resistance both within himself and in support of his clients. When I asked Rick about how his view of reality has evolved from doing this work he responded with:

A big piece of the puzzle shifted into place in doing hypnotherapy, and that is the subconscious mind's pull in creating our reality. Our beliefs create our realities. The key is that our reality is not the creation of our conscious beliefs at all. It's the creation of our subconscious beliefs. It is those things that we don't even know that we are believing that are creating what we experience, and coloring our experiences, and warping our perceptions. Because of my understanding, I am better able to be aware of how I have unconsciously created my reality. Now I

am creating more of a reality that I want to experience. By doing my own self-hypnosis and working with my subconscious beliefs, or working with another therapist, I am more conscious of what used to be subconscious. My consciousness has expanded and I feel more that I consciously create my reality.

Rick shares how, by showing up and being present with what is, he has become more intuitive.

Every time I do work with clients, I open up intuitively. And in fact, often times when I am with a client, I tap into some knowing that I was not previously aware of. And sometimes it happens in teaching, too. When I teach my trance breaker group I'll do EFT (EFT is a meridian based energy therapy technique that can be used on its own very effectively or used to support the hypnotherapy process) for forty minutes and then somewhere through the process, I become more open and channel information. One time I was teaching a trance breaker class when I didn't prepare a topic. I was creating the class completely on the fly as I taught. It was a little scary at first. I got a little nervous. Suddenly I shifted the conversation and focus of the class at one point and said, "What are you trying to create in the world? What is it you want?" Both of my students had the same answer. They both had the same thought. They said, "Harmony."

So, we began to explore the blocks to harmony in their lives: anger, sadness, grief. We began doing the EFT tapping process on those. And at one point I asked, "Can you have anger and harmony? Can they co-exist? And everyone thought, "Well, they are opposites." And then we discussed that maybe we can have both

anger and harmony. My spontaneous, unplanned questions invited in a wider perspective that harmony was not only joy and bliss. Harmony was balance and included anger and sadness.

Rick's spiritual connection to himself, God and his place in this life has expanded immensely.

I am growing by leaps and bounds through working with clients. I worked with a client who wanted to experience directly that she is God and that she creates her own reality. So we worked on all the blocks around her beliefs. As we worked, the whole energy and vibration in the room, in her and in myself changed. In the process of supporting her, I got that I am God in a really deep and really profound way. My shift in consciousness occurred through helping her break down her resistances to reach her realizations.

Doing this work as a hypnotherapist is inviting me to look at the oneness and how we are all connected. Through the reflections of that oneness [of clients] that walk in the door to my office, I see my practice as a hypnotherapist as a spiritual practice. I made a point of being ordained and becoming a minister when graduating. I recognized the spiritual aspect of what it is that I do. Before going into hypnotherapy it had crossed my mind to be a spiritual counselor of some sort. I had given thoughts to it and didn't know how to proceed. To be a spiritual counselor had been a want and desire.

Have your spiritual practice, perspective, or beliefs shifted because of hypnotherapy?

Yes. The big piece of the puzzle is that it is the subconscious. The subconscious is a part of our experience of God or the oneness or the all that Is. Feeling it and embodying it has been the key of the understanding. I can expand out of the human experience to get a bigger spiritual perspective and then to snap back into being human. I can feel reverence, respect and understanding for the human experience without judgment.

How about your perceptions of your self as a healer?

I think I have always been a healer only now I am owning it.

As Rick grows personally, his work is evolving.

Practice building and mentoring people has really drawn me lately. I may have my practice primarily being the mentoring along with a few people whom I still see. I want to work with other healers to help them get out their work.

I want to expand my mentoring and help them connect with the real world. I can take my real world experience with TV news and the catering company and integrate what I know with my healing experience to help other healers. There are so many people out there struggling with having a business and making a living as a healer and there are so many people in need of receiving the healing work. I want to help the therapists to reach the clients. The practice building is the practice of life.

What are your biggest challenges in doing the work?

I am just figuring out that I am not the right person for every client. Now I can tell a client if I am not the right person. Saying “no” to the business. That is a big shift for me and it feels so empowering. And now I am more able to deal with the continual challenge of stepping back from my personal issues that come up. I can

put my own issues aside easier when in the session. I have learned to stay focused on the client when in session, even if I would like to share personal experiences as a part of the conversation. Another big challenge is to have it be okay if someone doesn't change.

What are the biggest gifts in doing the work?

I feel like it is a gift every time I get to witness someone shift or have transformation out of pain.

What has doing the work as a hypnotherapist taught you?

I pay more attention to my language now. I learned the power of language. Now I really can see how powerful [it is]. I learned after the training that the words I said before and after the trance are just as important as those I say in the trance. My language is important not just in the therapy room with the client: language is important everywhere you speak in your life. And I learned to speak positively, to say what I want, not what I don't want. I learned to go for what I want, not away from what I don't want. I model and teach that it is always okay to be yourself and that you are only responsible for your own feelings.

I have moved away from good and bad judgments, in general. Life and your relationship to it, can be effortless. My clients experience returning to their natural state. One of my clients says, "Doing hypnotherapy is almost like getting rebooted." Through hypnotherapy you can revert back to the "original" programming. Doing this work has shifted my consciousness and awareness. And it has shifted the consciousness and awareness even more for my clients. I see that my clients become more spiritually aware. They have a wisdom inside of them that they think they didn't know. They know... they just forgot they know.

Rick exemplifies *wu-wei* as a facilitator and he also shows how he has deepened his ability in his personal life to work with the energy of what is rather than against it. He is more consciously aware of how he can join the flow of not only his clients' processes but the flow of his own life process. He has opened to accept and appreciate himself more fully and feels that his hypnotherapy practice is teaching him to listen more deeply and to respond more authentically to the way things are.

Julie Levin, MFT, CHT

For three years Julie Levin has practiced as a Marriage Family Therapist in Pleasant Hill, CA. Julie went through the HCH hypnotherapy training in the spring of 2006 and began using hypnotherapy in her practice while taking the training. Her personal and professional lives continue to transform through her practice of hypnotherapy. She states that her clients are doing their work faster and more easily with hypnotherapy:

Having practiced traditional psychotherapy for several years, I find that hypnotherapy gets clients the results they want faster and more easily. Using both together is extremely powerful. And I love the spiritual and creative aspects of hypnotherapy. I have a lot more fun at work when I use hypnosis.

Julie engages the client's higher Self in the process as she works.

To help the client access her higher Self I will often facilitate a process of having the client walk toward/seeking out/calling forth visualization – especially when the client has an unanswered question or specific need for guidance. I use the visualization as a metaphor for a quest (hopefully heroic!). I distinguish the

client's higher Self from the egoic self because the egoic self tends to be wrapped in defensive armor. This part is harder to get close to. Often this part doesn't like the client very much. The higher self is always kind, accepting, and open to connection.

In her work with hypnotherapy both as a client and hypnotherapist Julie has grown and transformed.

I've become more of my true self. More creative. Braver. More playful. Lighter. I am more committed to expressing love. In some ways I'm more patient. But I'm also a lot more inclined to cut through bullshit and head into the heart of things. I trust myself more as well as the universe. A good example is buying my house. It's something I've wanted for a long time. And during the course of the training, I realized I could do it and I would receive whatever help I needed.

With my clients I have a stronger sense of spiritual connection. I've always believed that therapy is loving a client into loving themselves, and this is re-confirmed on a deeper level with hypnotherapy. My view of reality has expanded. I'm more inclined to trust/enjoy/be in the unseen world more often now. And it feels very natural and normal to be there. And my spirituality is more solid – which is a little oxymoronic. But being raised as an atheist, I always had a vague sense of spirituality as a kind of soup – with all of us, all of life, floating around in it. I never gave thought to reincarnation or life purpose. Now I experience the soup is a lot more like a stew. The connections between people, animals, things, events, time... are much stronger. I like the idea provided by a Kabbalistic Rabbi – that God, being perfect love, wanted to know what it was to BECOME perfect love. And that we are God consciousness in the act of becoming perfect love.

Through hypnotherapy, my experience of myself as a healer has broadened and validated my perceptions of healing. I've always seen myself more as a midwife – with the client doing all the hard work of birthing herself. Now, though, I see the birthing process as gentler and easier with the client's higher Self facilitating the process.

I hold the work of hypnotherapy as precious and with great honor and respect. I feel sad that so many people live in a fog of fear and lack and lash out at each other as a result. I try to hold on to the knowledge that as bad as things are, more people are doing better than ever before in history. And maybe we really are in the process of “becoming perfect love”. I have come to trust more in myself and in the universe. And, it is fun and feels good to do this work!

Julie describes how she is more self-actualized in her professional and personal life through learning the tools of spiritual hypnotherapy and incorporating them into her practice and personal life. Her atheist background has transformed into a direct experience of the interrelatedness of all things and a more solid spiritual awareness. Her work as a psychotherapist and healer is more transpersonal through working with hypnotherapy.

“Molly”, CHT

Molly is a new graduate of the hypnotherapy training. She is going through a major personal life transition, having just completed a divorce and having very recently moved into her own home. She is living by herself for the first time in twenty years. She took the training for personal growth, but it looks like she will be transitioning into doing hypnotherapy work with others in the next few months. Her interview shows the levels of personal transformation and healing that are available through doing hypnotherapy.

When I met Molly, she had suffered most of her life with daily symptoms of anxiety and fear of not being good enough. She felt self-consciousness in almost all social situations. She described her previous experiences of two or three sessions of hypnosis for public speaking connected to a severe social phobia. She got no relief from the sessions, which took place over twenty years ago.

I asked her to describe what she remembered about the sessions. She recalled they were directive. The directive style didn't allow her to interact with the therapist or go in her own direction with the process. The higher Self was not used in the process. Since working with a transpersonal form of hypnotherapy and taking the hypnotherapy certification course, Molly understands her higher Self as:

... that part of me that has all the answers. Everything is there. I just need to access it. I had not accessed that part before doing hypnotherapy with you [Holly] and taking the training. I had an awareness of the higher Self before, through

self-help and spiritual books, I had a concept of the higher Self, but no direct, practical experience of it.

Molly's first direct experience of her higher Self was in one of our first sessions.

She describes her experience of contacting her higher Self:

"I feel all of the angst, worry and self-consciousness that I used to experience all the time...I feel an absence of that. I feel a calm and I feel very relaxed... the knot in my stomach that I have always had in the past is gone.

And, it's not even so much that I always see clearly what an answer is; but I just feel more like myself, like I am supposed to feel. Instead of all this "stuff", this busi-ness that is going on. It is so freeing. I feel so free. (tears) I feel like my true self, like I am meant to be. Instead of the way I pretend to be around other people, or the way I think I am supposed to act, or my perfectionism thing. It is gone. I feel like...This new experience of myself started during our private sessions when I would get glimpses of it. Do you remember when I would come back and say, "How can I preserve this? How can I keep this going all the time?" Then the connection would go away. One little life thing would happen and I would go right back to the anxiety and fear. I couldn't sustain the connection.

When I took the hypnotherapy training I learned that once you access it, you can train yourself to re-connect. Now I know that the connection is there even though all these little things, these life things that are happening that are going wrong, can create a feeling of the loss of it. Instead of getting wrapped up in all the little things of life, I know they will pass in a few moments. I can now handle the small distractions and go right back to my calm. Now right away, I catch myself. I

choose it. I have a signal I use to catch myself. I just say, “OK. It is something you said. That is not who you are.” I know now who I really am.

Molly describes the areas of her life that have transformed through doing this work:

Every area of my life has changed. I used to have a social phobia that ran my life. It no longer runs my life. The old Molly was scared of everything. I felt I had to be perfect for everyone. It didn't matter who it was. The gardener could come in. I had to be perfect. I had to act perfect. I had to look perfect. When people came over to the house, the house had to be perfect. Most of the time I thought I could present “perfect” but it was so limiting because I couldn't be perfect surrounded by other people. It was so exhausting that I didn't want to be around other people. Whenever I was out of the house, I wanted to escape and go home and take the makeup off so I could just relax. I didn't have to be “on” at home. Whenever I was around people, I felt that I had to be “on” all the time. I had to be the entertainment: funny, witty, smart. Always do and say the right thing and always look right. I was compelled to be “on” and perfect so people would like me and aspire to be me...I don't even know why that was so important.

The new Molly,... It amazes me even sitting here talking about it, how I have looked when I have people in my new home, because I just moved in and it is this revolving door of people coming in and doing things. I had a lot of things go wrong with the house, with the appliances. I am working with someone who is helping me buy furniture on consignment, to put a look together which I can't do. He is very hip and stylish. In the past I couldn't even open the door and let somebody like him in the house without having everything perfect. But with him, it is impossible, because he will call and come right over with a table he found. I

have the oldest t-shirt on and no makeup. I let him in. I answer the door and I still can function. In the past things like that would happen and I would be so self-conscious and thinking about only how I looked, that I wouldn't be listening to what he said, I wouldn't know what was going on. I can focus on what is happening. One day I had panties in the bathroom on the counter and he had to go in and look at the light fixtures. (laughter). Then I remembered some of the things you said, "just talk about it". Actually, it turns out to be fun and it makes the situation light and he laughs, and the panties are there and we just go on. I can laugh about it. Before I would be looking at the panties, thinking about the panties, being so humiliated that they were still out , and then beating myself up over it for days afterwards. I'd think, "Why didn't I clean up before he came over?"

I still want people to like me, but I realize that I am more comfortable and they will be more comfortable if I am not so uptight and trying to be perfect all the time. It is okay for them to see me. I think it is all of your stuff like this that makes you even more lovable than the perfect. Out in the world I am just more comfortable. I am comfortable with myself and my life. The challenge is the rosacea. It is almost completely gone away. I still have my moments, though. I have to be careful to not let my face be a big focus. My face has been so much better that that is adding to the confidence. I feel that on the outside and the inside.

On a scale of 0 to 10, my social phobia was a 10 before studying hypnotherapy. Now it is a 0. Even if I am feeling something, it is a 1 or a 2 and it goes back to a 0.

I asked Molly if she ever had any idea that she could change her level of fear and anxiety. And I asked her what it was that allowed her to heal the dynamic that was running her life.

Going through the hypnotherapy classes and being able to access my higher Self changed that. The classes were so painful for me to go through. Everyday of class I had to face my social phobia and I wanted to call you [Holly] every day and tell you I am not coming. It was exhausting. One of the things that really helped me in the class is that I realized for the first time that everybody has pain.

I knew that conceptually... yeah, everybody has problems, everybody has pain, but nobody's pain is as big as mine.. I am the only one that feels this way. I am the only one that is suffering in this way. Sure everybody else has their stuff, but not like this. Not debilitating like this. And then, I realized that as the other women told their stories, that even they have the same public speaking fears. I thought, "What? You are kidding me!" They did. They would describe some of the things that I was feeling before certain events or before things happen at work or whatever, and I guess I realized that everyone is the same in a sense, that I am not unique at all. This really helped with how I interact with other people. They could be just like I used to be. They are possibly just putting on this front, holding it together like I have in the past. But behind that facade they have their pain and their stories. And that maybe they haven't even worked through their issues yet. They could be suffering right at this moment that I am talking to them. So instead

of being so, really selfish... that it was all about me, me, me , me, me...that's all I would think about all the time. I wasn't really thinking about anybody else's pain. Now I focus more on them. I am able to be other oriented now and I couldn't before.

How have your viewpoint and perceptions changed?

In some ways I feel sad for all of the time that I spent being so fearful and focused on just myself. But on the other hand, I feel it made me extra sensitive and compassionate in a way.

How do you see yourself now?

I see myself as happy, confident, and comfortable. I call myself "Lucy". I am sort of bumbling and stumbling through. But it is more with a sense of humor now, as opposed to beating myself up all the time over stuff. I have more of a sense of humor and I laugh at myself more.

How do you see the world?

I used to see the world as a very scary place. Now I see the world as possibilities, as an adventure.

How do you see reality and the universe and your part in it?

Lately I have been thinking about that. You know I have been so focused on the house, and furniture, and the divorce, and even though I feel more expansive, that this is sort of a narcissistic little time for me. I actually gave myself until the end of the year to just to be this way. I want to do something more important. I want to take the internship. I want to give back. I want to help. Another thing that I have always wanted to do is that I want to volunteer at ARF. That is very important to me. And I am going to get very involved with the Diablo Ballet, with

the fund raising. I am going to get on committees and maybe help with the little girls. I have this need and this really strong desire to give.

What about your spirituality?

I am so much more spiritual now, in a happy way. I am so much more optimistic. Difficult things have happened. My divorce was very, very difficult...the sellers with the closing of the house, there were difficulties there. Now it is more about what I am supposed to learn from these things that happen. Before, I knew that as a concept, "Oh, Yeah, what am I supposed to learn? Oh, More misery!" But now, it is really a lot more than that. What *am* I supposed to learn? You know what's really helping? My friend Mark is very spiritual. He loves talking about spiritual things. Because we talk a lot about these things. He is listening and he wants to learn about how I feel about things. It is fun to talk about things. If I say I feel this way about something and Mark is around and something triggering happens then I think, "Well, I better practice what I preach". It makes me more focused and more authentic, more aware and self-responsive, rather than me being so emotional.

How does hypnotherapy support change?

I think for me it was forcing me to go through the pain, experiencing the pain of the things that I thought I was so afraid of. I experienced what I was trying to resist. In the past, I thought, I am willing to do anything to change. I hadn't found the thing that would work. I guess I thought that if I kept searching there would be a moment when I would just change. There would be this defining moment and then one second before I would be the old Molly... but I had to realize that that is not how it works or how it would happen. I realized that it is a process and that it

is ongoing. It is every minute, every day. Except it is a more positive thing because I have the tools and I know what to do to get more present.

How do you distinguish your higher Self from your egoic self?

For me they are very different. My ego part would be worrying about my looks and my perfectionism thing. My higher Self knows that this worrying is not what this life is really about. My higher Self comes out during the day. I don't have to go into a formal trance. I lie in bed at night and give myself Reiki. I review the day and this is my higher Self time. I also use hypnosis tapes.

I cannot emphasize how much it has changed my daily life and my thought process and my problem solving. Just everything is changed. I get these flashes or realization all the time. I feel like I carry myself differently. I feel like an adult. I feel so much better and confident in myself. Before, I felt like I was just a little girl. I feel like I have grown up. That is the best way for me to explain it. Like when you go through something really big in your life and you just feel more mature.

What are grownups made out of?

I just have all of this love inside of me instead of anger. I was just angry at everybody because of my pain, somehow. I hated myself because of the way that I was. I thought, "Why did I have to be that way?" And I thought that nobody else was this way. Now I have moments of, this may sound corny, but sometimes I am so happy that I feel like I am going to burst. Then I have a moment when I think, "Oh my God, do I deserve to be this happy?" And then I think, "Yes. I do deserve to be this happy" and I just enjoy it. [Molly and I are both in tears here] I feel so proud of myself for having the courage to do this work.

When I am in Molly's presence I feel like I am with a very different person than the woman I met two years ago. She smiles and laughs more easily. She is freer and easier with sharing her thoughts. She speaks up when in groups and is much more other-oriented. Molly accepts more fully her value and worthiness. And she no longer allows herself to be victimized or abused. She is much less identified with her appearance and is more connected to who she truly is as a woman, friend, and partner. Molly is more responsive and less reactive to life. She is more balanced and whole.

Tammy Hartman, CCHT

Tammy is a single mom of three who grew up in an evangelical Christian community. In the community she trained to be a minister. Tammy has a special gift. She is clairvoyant. She sees and hears spirits of non-physical people, those beings who have passed on and who have not made a complete journey to the light. Before she became a

hypnotherapist, she helped people release attached spirits by performing rituals she learned in her church. Her skills and approach to doing the releasement work have changed considerably since doing the training. She works full time as a hypnotherapist, massage therapist, and coach. Using the Subjective Units of Disturbance Scale from 0 to 10, (10 being the most difficult), she reports several before and after SUDS scales as example of how doing the training and the work of a hypnotherapist has changed her life. Pre-training Tammy reported a SUDS level of a 9 for anxiety around her lack of self-esteem, a 7 for her anxiety for her lack of confidence in her self, an 8 for feeling ineffective in her work, a 10 around her grief for the suicide of her teenage daughter and a 9 around feeling that she was inadequate because of her lack of a degree and formal education. Currently, Tammy reports that her self esteem anxiety is a 1, her lack of confidence is a 1, her feelings of being ineffective in her work is a 0, her grief for her daughter's death fluctuates between a 1 and a 2, and her feeling inadequate about her education is now a 0. Her interview follows:

Tammy comments on her own experience of going to a more traditionally trained hypnotherapist before she came to HCH:

The hypnotherapist was more of a guide. I followed her. "Follow me. I will take you to there." I worked with her for about four years. I needed someone to pull me along. But I outgrew it. It didn't allow me to find my own answers. It didn't allow me to go to the depths of the practice I do. It didn't allow me to explore or get my own answers. My work is so much more allowing of the client to find his or her own answers. Her style was, more directive: "I will take you there."

What did you do before you became a hypnotherapist?

I worked as a floral designer and a massage therapist before I came to learn hypnotherapy at HCH four years ago. In my hypnotherapy practice I work with the higher Self all the time. Working with the higher Self helps people get their analytical thoughts and their judgments out of the way. I introduce my clients to their higher Self early in the therapy process. Usually, the first and second time I meet with them. I teach the client self-hypnosis and how to access a safe place and get still and quiet and listen to the higher Self.

How do you know if the client has accessed the higher Self?

I can tell if the client is accessing the higher Self because of the ease by which the answers come. The higher Self usually responds with a faster pace; it is easier going. The client is responding without judgment.

Since doing the hypnotherapy training and working with hypnotherapy in your practice in what ways has your experience of yourself or Self changed?

Just about everything in my life has changed. I don't fight so much. I don't stay in my head with stuff. My life is so much easier. I tend not to stay with a problem for very long. I think to myself, "I know it is OK... it is what it is." Then I am able to move through difficult things. My experience of daily life has changed. I enjoy just living and breathing. The process of doing hypnotherapy has given me the ability to flow and to be comfortable with who I am.

What has the process of doing hypnotherapy taught you?

By facilitating hypnosis sessions I have learned how to get out of the way of both myself and my clients. Hypnotherapy got me out of my head, my thoughts, out of the way of my history, my past. Instead of living in the past or in my thoughts, I live more who I am now, in the present. Hypnosis taught me that it is easy. That

life can be easy. I believe that everything that is said in the session by the client or by me, both of us hear. I learn something every time I do a session.

Has doing hypnotherapy affected your patience level?

I have an incredible amount of patience. It is not so much patience that has changed; what has changed is coming more from allowing... that it is what it is. So there is no resistance.

How about your ability to trust?

That was the last of things to come to me...that last thing so far that hypnotherapy helped me with, and probably the most powerful one. And the trust was me. I was the one I was learning to trust.

How about your experience of compassion?

I think I was always really compassionate, but now it is freer. Now I have compassion for me. For life. For living. Everything I have to give my clients was gifted to me first.

What about judgment of yourself and others?

My judgment has turned into more discernment now. Like seeing both sides. I can flow from this perspective to the other perspective. And stay neutral. My vision is clearer and broader.

And your levels of acceptance?

I have almost total acceptance. It is almost comical. It is easy to accept. When I took myself out of the judgment seat...that narrow vision of why...like why, why, why? Instead of pressing against that, when I got out of judgment I could see more clearly with a bigger perspective. Then acceptance came too.

And your ability to love?

That's amazing. A little word and such a big experience. I have learned to even love the difficult parts of life. If I know I am in the middle of something difficult, then love takes me right to the other side. Boop. I am there. It comes up even stronger when there is resistance. I can see right through it. Love allows that. Love is an experience of being in this place that I think I am. Love is something that is there in everything.

Bodywork versus hypnotherapy: What is the difference in the work?

My experience of being with clients and people now is magical. I love what I do. To watch people begin to heal and transform is a feeling that I live. It has become so familiar, so much a part of my daily life. And, it is so fun. It is magical. It is a magical amazing journey. I love what I do. Doing this work has carried over to my life... even when I am at the grocery store. I used to be withdrawn. I didn't really understand people. Now I understand. I have the experience that they are OK where they are. I say "Hi" with my head held up. I don't feel my old resistance and pain when I am with people. I no longer feel compelled to try to get out of social situations. I am much more expansive and I just have fun.

How has your view of reality changed?

I know now that reality is a perception. Wherever people are, that's their reality. We create it ourselves. Wherever I am, that's my reality. I have learned that reality is a perception of our awareness.

How about your Spirituality?

Spirituality is an energy and a relationship with life and higher Self and God and the Light. Spirituality is that interaction. How is the interaction different now?

It is more allowing. It used to be constricted. In a box. With my Christian upbringing, I always thought that with spirituality you had to believe a certain way. That you had to follow a schedule, follow a routine, follow the rules and then you had “spirituality”. Somehow I had separated God and spirituality. Now I know I “live” spirituality and everything is one. Now I live it more congruently.

How has doing this work affected your spiritual beliefs?

It has allowed me to find my own. I was raised as a very strict Christian to follow the rules of the house. Hypnotherapy allowed me to open up and expand my awareness, and expand my own spirituality and my own relationship with it. It is not so much textbook, not so much believe and do what you are told. It is spiritual. I learned that about myself through different hypnosis processes.

Which hypnosis processes?

Learning to access my higher Self was definitely the first step. I discovered that I am bigger than what I was thinking I am in my head. When I found that out, that was amazing. The experience of my higher Self and the experience of clients’ higher Selves has taught me this.

Where is your Christian belief system in all of this?

The Christian dogma has become very small. It is almost not useful any more. I still have an awareness of the church ideologies because there are people in my life who still live in the dogma of the church. But I see them as a minute little piece of the information. I see most of these people as confused.

How does it affect your spiritual practices?

Doing this work has allowed me to access expanded states a lot easier. And it lets me feel worthy enough to have a spiritual practice and that I could be still and

quiet and let experience come. I can enter into a prayer and meditation without expectation of failure or success. My spirituality is more about being and feeling what is right and letting information come, rather than fighting against it, Now my experience is that the truth is more in me, rather than outside of me.

How about your perceptions of the world and your place in it?

I *have* a place in it. I didn't know that before, I always felt like a stranger to this existence. Hypnotherapy allowed my to find that I do have a place and I do have ownership of my experience. The world is just an amazing place. My place is my ability to be present and to own it. It is very comfortable. It is home. It is easy to be here now.

Has doing hypnotherapy changed you as a healer or facilitator?

This is my favorite part. I allow the wisdom to come thorough me, instead of analyzing it. Being a healer is not a label. It is a way of being. Being a hypnotherapist is not a certificate on my wall, but an experience and process and intimacy that I can share, in a way that is structured to empower and in a way that can support clients to embrace all these things for themselves. Sit back and allow and let it go. Allow it to come in and do its magic. That's God, that's love, with presence. I recognize that I have always been this love and presence. I just didn't know it until now.

How about yourself as a healer doing massage?

It was more structured. More hands-on. There was definitely healing taking place and there was definitely intuitive influence back and forth. Massage is more of a dance with the physical plane. Hypnotherapy is a spiritual dance.

Of course, doing hypnotherapy has affected my body work. I allow myself to know intuitively when I pick up information or I am directed to use a certain stroke or technique. Rather than just following the structure of a massage that I was trained to follow, I follow whatever is there and be with it. I show up and I get out of the way. Now, I am present. It comes through the presence, not through the structure. I am out of the way and they are out of the way.

I recognize that the clients are healers themselves. I can help them find that healing. I love it when the inner light goes on and they figure out [that] it is they who is the healer, not me and anything I did.

Have any clients come to what you have discovered through this work?

Yes. I am very honored to be a hypnotherapist. I always wanted to be a hero, do something heroic: to be a doctor, or a fireman. That never worked out. Now, I am a hero. to myself, to my family, and to my clients.

What is your biggest challenge?

I get impatient because I want everyone to have this kind of opening. I get frustrated with some of the public's resistance. But I believe that everything has its time. I wanted to be a hero as a child. I got turned down for the jobs all along the path. And then finally my opportunity to be a hero came. I think that soul opportunity happens for everyone at least once in life, even if it is in their death.

What has hypnotherapy from a spiritual perspective taught you?

Spirit has taught me to get out of the way and relax. I used to think there was a better process, technique, something more I needed to know. I was never satisfied with my skills and education. When I found out that it is all about spirit, it is all about that relationship to spirit. It is all about that we are complete already and

that we just have to allow it to be seen and to show up. When I stopped fighting that, I let spirit show me the way. Spirit taught me to get out of the way.

And there is always more to learn, new experiences, new lights inside, new directions. That allows me to not get bogged down in the thoughts and experience that this is hard work. Hypnotherapy is not work. It is an experience. It is presence. It is a relationship with God, the universe, the earth, and with each other.

I wish hypnotherapy didn't have the label or the preconceived ideas that the public has about hypnotherapy. It has the ding of stage hypnosis. I feel sad about that. It needs to be recognized for what it is. It is an honor to be a hypnotherapist and I want to bring more honor and understanding to the work.

Of all of the people interviewed for this dissertation, Tammy has most embodied the Taoist precept of returning to the state of "uncarved wood". Tammy had to disengage from years of dogmatic religious training in order to return to herself and to trust herself. Because she is naturally very intuitive, when she allows herself to..." empty herself of everything", and to... "Let the mind rest at peace..." (English, 16) her psychic abilities flourish. I have worked with Tammy twice on paranormal cases where there have been psychokinetic manifestations and both times Tammy has successfully returned to "uncarved wood" by emptying herself of her projections and mind chatter. In this empty state, she did intuitive readings and had accurate psychic perceptions that totally supported the investigations and the healings for the paranormal experiencers in the cases.

Julie Scholz, CCHT

Julie took the training at HCH the summer of 2000. Beginning in 2001, Julie took the six-month internship program at HCH and began facilitating sessions in the low-fee community clinic.

I was at a point in my life when I was unemployed and searching... for something that would be meaningful in my life. I was ready for a change. Because I went into a career that I wasn't very happy with, the universe kept telling me to get out of what I was doing, [marketing and PR] but I didn't know what I wanted to do. And there was a lot of synchronicity with the timing of connecting with HCH and the hypnotherapy training. It intrigued me. I had been interested in hypnosis and hypnotherapy since I was a teenager. I found that I really enjoyed the work. It took a while for me to understand and appreciate all of the parts to being a hypnotherapist. I chose it in the beginning on a whim. Soon I felt that it was

incredibly meaningful work. What I liked about it is that you can have an impact on people's lives pretty quickly. That was really important to me. Having results quickly. The sessions I facilitated felt really, really important. I think it was in the internship that I started having some success. I actually began to have a sense in the internship that I could be really good at hypnotherapy by just going into the session and being spontaneous. And being spontaneous was not something that was very easy for me. Also, I enjoyed that I was able to talk with this work. I am a talker. I felt, "This is perfect for me. I can talk with meaning and focus". And then what started happening in the training and then ramping up in the internship was that I realized what spiritual work this is. And that was the extra piece that I hadn't had in my corporate jobs.

I recognized the spiritual part [of hypnotherapy] through the transpersonal model that we follow here at HCH, and my orientation became very clear. There were certainly experiences that were beyond the individual. And there was also a spiritual openness to it. There could be glimpses of God for one person and for somebody else there could be a connection with angels or guides. For someone else it might be an overwhelmingly powerful presence, energy, or a connection to nature. For everybody it is different. But people were having these experiences, and I was facilitating them. That is what I was interested in.

I still remember one exceptionally profound session I had with a young client in the internship. He was a thirteen-year-old boy. His mother brought him for hypnotherapy because he was getting into fights at school. He was a good kid, but

he was picking on people, and he didn't want to be picked on himself. He had this tough kid bravado. I knew from the intake form that they were not a religious family. And he had never done hypnosis before and he was excellent at it, like most kids are. In the session he was open-eyed the whole time and he started seeing something. He was seeing someone that I could not see in the room. And his whole face showed it and then, of course, his voice. First, he saw his dead grandparents and it was very touching to me and it was very touching to him. And they were telling him that he is a good boy, and that they are looking after him. And this is something this kid needed to hear. And then, his whole face lit up and he basically said that he saw Jesus. And you could not make this kid make this experience up. This was not a kid who had a reference point to Jesus. This was a tough kid. He was crying. Tears were streaking down his face. Tears were streaking down my face. He had the biggest smile on his face. He said, "It's Jesus and Jesus loves me," ... or something to that effect. And I remember thinking, "That was a real experience". It doesn't matter if it was something in his mind or whether Jesus was in the room, which I realize was entirely possible. This experience was beyond my normal acceptance of how things work. I thought, "This is so profound, so real". It was a mystical experience. In a good way it shook me down to my bones and I thought, "WOW! How powerful the mind is; how powerful the subconscious is." I saw the effect it had on him, and I felt the effect it had on me. I was so touched by it. And obviously he was. That was something very real.

So anyway, all of those [spiritual] things started happening after beginning to work with hypnotherapy, and of course, these experiences completely hooked me into doing this work. I have had many experiences like this one over the years.

Do you work with the concept of the higher Self?

I sometimes have a problem with the terminology. I often call it “your wise best self”. I tend to use the client’s language from what I get in the intake. If the client has a certain spiritual orientation, I will use his or her words. I will often call it “that part of you that connects with God”, or “that part of you that is your spirit or soul”. I usually make a suggestion towards the beginning of the induction...something to the effect that everything in the session is for their highest good. And then I tell the client, usually before the induction when I am doing my orientation, that, “There is a part of you that knows what is best for you that is going to guide you through this [process] and that part is going to be activated. That is why you are safe; that is why you are in control”.

Sometimes it is a challenge to determine whether the part is the client’s higher Self or the ego part. I just have to trust. I refer to the part that knows what’s best for you, the part that has your own solutions. [I suggest that] we are going to tap into that part. That is the beauty of this tool of hypnosis. That wise part is always there. You can just access it more easily in hypnosis.

Through asking Julie to describe how doing the work of a hypnotherapist affected her, she clearly discusses the experience of her intuition flowing and having the experience of how connected we are with others in a unified field of experience and energy. Her work becomes her own meditation practice.

Doing this work has affected me quite a bit. I am certainly more confident in my abilities as a hypnotherapist and consequently, I am more confident in my life. The “healer” word is not something I would have used to describe myself. But if I had to admit to being a healer, I would now. Knowing that I can do these [healing] things makes me feel more empowered and confident in my life. And, I am definitely more spontaneous. Becoming more spontaneous was a big thing for me. There is definitely a part of me that likes control and likes to map everything out. My right brain has gotten more flexible and more of a workout so I can be more spontaneous. The new spontaneity is in the sessions; but there are ways that it carries out into my life, as well. I have more compassion having worked with my clients. I have more compassion for people, in general.

How do you access your own higher Self?

When I taught my first class at HCH, I remember what I tried to say about this work: I am a channel. But my channeling experience is colored by my filters: my life experience, my personality, my persnickiness. But sometimes, while working, these insights come and I have no idea where they are coming from. Whether it is my higher Self kicking in, or my intuition, or I get a really good clue, or make a really good guess, or whether it is the creator energy moving through me or my guides, I don't know. I just have to open myself and let it come out. And get out of my own way. And what a blessing when this happens for me and the client. I think that the presence I feel in session is the window. Something happens when I close the [therapy room] door and I am with a client. I go into a different state. It is my best me. I think, “Wow, that was the exactly the best thing to say at the right time”. That is my best self happening.

I am finally starting to access my higher Self in my daily life. It is from doing this work and it is from doing my own work. I do have more faith in myself. The miracle that happened in my life is that I actually really do like and love myself now...way more than before I started doing this work. And I will say something else that I very much believe: that whatever is going on with me in my life, the clients that show up have the same issues. My life played out the whole law of attraction. Someone inevitably comes in with a presenting issue that I think has nothing to do with me. Then, in the session they will say something from their higher wisdom or from their guidance that is totally and directly applicable to me. It is almost exactly what I need to hear. I always feel like there is this weird way that I'm there to help the clients, but they are also there to help me. I actually need to listen in the sessions to what they are saying because I don't listen to myself. But when I am in session, I am so completely aware of what is being said that I am listening on another other level and I am taking in the information....it's very helpful. Doing hypnotherapy is like my spiritual meditation practice!

I was raised a Catholic. I rebelled against Catholicism, definitely by third grade. Then I became a Unitarian Universalist. That was a big part of my thirties. What I really wanted then, was community. I hung out with like-minded people, and yet there was something missing. There really was not a spiritual component to these humanistic churches that I could feel inside. I considered going to graduate theology school at Pacific School of Religion at GTU in Berkeley and getting a Masters in Divinity and becoming a minister. And then I started doing the

hypnotherapy training. And I started feeling, “Well, *this* is real. This is that spiritual piece that I was looking for. I am doing in my work, but it is really not just MY work. I have this spiritual part in my life now and I have my community and my social justice work. The other things I did and had in my life started feeling so empty. And, I started getting annoyed, frankly, at what was missing in the church. I didn’t want anyone telling me what to believe. I didn’t want to affiliate with a Christian or Jewish or Buddhist practice. I wanted something where the heart was involved. What ended up happening [was] that I went from being so completely involved in the church and becoming a minister to completely dropping the religion altogether. Probably if I were going to throw out some words, I am a spiritualist. My concept of God has really changed. I don’t believe in the “man on the throne” God anymore. I think *God IS*...my understanding is still evolving. I believe that there is this great source, this great power that has always been there. I believe that we are all a part of that. I believe there is something bigger than me... and even bigger than us together... us as a community, even us as a planet. I guess that is what I consider as God.

As a teenager I learned about reincarnation and I absolutely, whole-heartedly, believed in that. Reincarnation was the first spiritual philosophy I could believe. My hypnotherapy practice supported this; it certainly gave me even more evidence of believing in it. My training also gave me words [for discussing regression therapy] with hypnotherapy clients who didn’t believe in it, and that was a beautiful thing. Nobody has to believe [in reincarnation to experience a past life].

Through doing Hypnotherapy there is one thing that really shifted, something that I didn't believe in before that I whole heartedly believe in now, [which] is the concept of spirit releasement . There are other energies or spirits that may be affiliated with us that we are unaware of. There can be trapped spirits that have not made it to the light that can be helped to get there. Supporting these spirits and attached clients through hypnotherapy is the most meaningful work that I can think of doing. I feel like spirit releasement is the higher calling... and I do feel like I am called to do this work. I feel that this is the higher ministry. This is the ministry, but not in the way other people recognize. What more profound work can I do? I help spirits move on. In the six years of my practice I have probably done 50 [spirit releasement] sessions.

Each of these spirit releasement sessions has been life-changing for me and my clients. I remember every one of these sessions. My body lets me know [when a spirit needs releasing] and that is a gift because I [used to] feel that I am not sensitive to energy. What I have finally figured it out is that every time there is a spirit attachment, my body gives me chills. THANK YOU! To me that signal is a gift. It is my barometer. Also, I AM listening carefully to the [client's phrasing and] words. But I get this extra little bonus with the chills with the spirit releasement clients.

When I move to Spokane, I will start up a new practice. I am moving to a place that will be more conservative. It will be really interesting to see how I will put

my work out there. Whatever I end up calling myself, I feel like I will make the spiritual part of this work dominate.

Julie created a one woman theater piece that she performed in San Francisco the summer of 2006. The focus was her experience being introduced to the spirit releasement work and how deeply hypnotherapy has changed her life.

What a great story my theater piece was. People don't know that there is an evangelist in me. I feel like I am a hypno-evangelist. I have no problem with that. I want the world to know about hypnotherapy and I want them to understand it. There are so many misconceptions out there about many things in the world, especially about hypnosis and hypnotherapy: what it is, what it isn't. I feel hypnotherapy is the most beautiful, drug free, natural tool that people could have if they just let themselves; but many have all this fear. I feel like I want to tell people about it because it changed my life, and changed many, many of my clients' lives.

Something else shifted: I came from a love of psychology since I was a teenager. When I was in my twenties, I was in traditional psychotherapy for five years. I paid out of pocket. I went every week. And truthfully, I don't think it helped that much other than there was someone who would listen to me every week. There was a time over the years when I really started questioning the value of what I had gotten from traditional therapy. The money that went to weekly therapy was a huge percentage of my salary. When I became a hypnotherapist I felt: I am not going to do my practice that way. I do not believe in that model of authority. I

believe that people have their own answers. I am the guide. I am the facilitator.

I think the traditional model of therapy that the therapists have the answers is bullshit. I have made such an effort to not have my practice be that way.

How has hypnotherapy affected your understanding of reality and your perceptions of the world?

You can get to the truth with hypnotherapy, but the truth may not be factual. The truth is a reflection of your own reality.

Summary of Interviews

The stories of these five hypnotherapists are fairly typical of the transformation that occurs for the hypnotherapist when working with a transpersonal empowerment model. For each one, there is an expanded sense of Self, a sense that their work is spiritual and transformational by nature for both their clients and themselves, and that they are making a significant difference in the lives of their clients. Because their individual clients are growing and shifting their consciousness, they are making a difference in the collective consciousness of people in general. It is evident that, though they may not directly name the Taoist concepts, each is guided by Taoist precepts and spiritual concepts in the style of their work.

We learn and practice the transformational and spiritual benefits of going with the flow, and working with, rather than against, resistance:

“I have come to a place where I embrace resistance and shift to a place of being excited when the client is resistant.” (Reynolds, 40)

“What has changed is coming from more allowing...that it is what it is. So there is no resistance.” (Hartman, 59)

We realize, by doing the work of hypnotherapy, that we are a part of a bigger energetic unified field through which we can experience profound mystical states of knowing and perceiving, and connecting with the Divine:

There were certain experiences that were beyond the individual. There could be glimpses of God for one person, and for somebody else there could be a connection with angels or guides. (Scholz, 66)

I got that I am God in a really deep and profound way. (Reynolds, 42)

We experience the loss of fear (even of death) and have a growing trust in the process of life as we allow life to live through us:

I allow the wisdom to come through me...allow it to come in and do its magic. That's God. That's love. (Hartman, 63)

I feel all of the angst, worry and self-consciousness that I used to experience all the time...I feel an absence of that...I feel so free. (Molly, 50)

We expand our compassion and our ability to love and accept what is in ourselves and in others:

The higher Self is always kind, accepting, and open to connection. (Levin, 47)

Doing this work, my patience, ability to trust, my compassion, acceptance, and ability to love have all increased. (Reynolds, 40)

I actually really do like and love myself now. (Scholz, 71)

We hypnotherapists feel that we have a purpose in the cosmic plan and we show up more fully in our daily lives to embody that purpose:

I want to give back. I want to help. (Molly, 54);

I always wanted to be a hero, to do something heroic. Now I am a hero. (Hartman, 64);

I am called to do this work. (Scholz, 74)

Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks

Reflections and Learnings

I made some wonderful, unsuspected discoveries through the process of writing and interviewing for this book. Conducting the interviews with my hypnotherapy graduates and colleagues gave me an intimate experience of knowing some of their deepest and most transformative experiences with hypnotherapy. For as much time as I have spent with these people as colleagues, there were parts of their experiences of doing this work that they had never previously shared with me. I was profoundly affected to realize just how *consistently* life-changing this work is for both the hypnotherapists and their clients. Over time, the practice of doing this work results in shifts of perceptions of reality, shifts in levels of consciousness and more joy and ease in life.

There was a very personal benefit for me in writing this book, too. I had an intimate experience with myself. I got a chance to articulate and give new form to what I have been gestating, cultivating and teaching for over twenty years: an approach to teaching and mentoring hypnotherapists that follows transformational and empowering spiritual principles. I think of a creation story I hear in metaphysical circles about the creation of the universe: God (as all there ever was and as all there is) was bored and lonely. He wanted some excitement and an opportunity to *experience* himself in all of his greatness and a chance to truly *see* himself. So he created the universe. In a very humbling way, I have had a chance to look back at myself through writing this dissertation. I had a chance to see myself and my work with new eyes and with a new sense of appreciation for what has evolved from really showing up as a teacher and therapist, and from doing my own inner work. I appreciate the level of maturity that the

years of doing this work brings. I appreciate the growing wisdom that comes through experience. I used resources for writing, but my main resource was my own experience.

Writing this dissertation brought to form a structure for the teaching of spiritual hypnotherapy that I didn't have before. By focusing on Taoist principles, I discovered that there is a backbone of wisdom that gives me the language and conceptual form to teach the spiritual aspects of hypnotherapy in a more grounded way.

In Summary

It is evident that we transpersonal hypnotherapists are doing spiritual work in the world with a commitment to help others to transform and heal. In the future, spiritual hypnotherapy may also become known as a spiritual practice for expanding consciousness and moving its practitioners towards greater inner and outer peace. Until then, we hypnotherapists will continue to do our work with individuals and groups and know that the personal evolution of the individuals doing the work of transpersonal hypnotherapy is contributing, in a significant way, to the well-being of our community and to the evolution of human consciousness. I will continue to do my small part by training my students in a spiritual form of hypnotherapy that models presence, empowerment, and transformation. And I will continue to give thanks, on a daily basis, for the honor, privilege and grace of the ministry of this meaningful, spiritual work.

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