

# SELF HYPNOSIS

## for Cosmic Consciousness



Achieving Altered States, Mystical  
Experiences, and Spiritual Enlightenment

Ronald A. Havens PhD

*Self Hypnosis  
for Cosmic  
Consciousness*

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Mystical Experiences, and  
Spiritual Enlightenment*

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# *Preface*

This book contains straightforward instructions for creating spiritual, religious, or mystical experiences within yourself and others. It offers detailed descriptions of these transformational epiphanies, as well as potential explanations for their short and long-term healing effects. More importantly, perhaps, it provides verbatim examples of hypnotic procedures that were specifically designed to precipitate such life-changing events.

Whether enlightenment experiences are purposefully induced or occur spontaneously and unexpectedly, these altered states of mind and body invariably confront us with the oneness, timelessness, beauty, truth, and perfection of ourselves and of the universe. They offer an unbiased and expansive view of the world that challenges and replaces our limited way of knowing and perceiving. As such, they reintroduce us to the awe, wonder, and joy of childhood while surprising us with the passionate spirituality and sensuality of adulthood. They connect us to each other and fill us with a deep appreciation for the fundamental forces of nature. Ultimately, they convey an essential but inexpressible truth, a truth hidden deep within us all that removes our anxieties, tensions, and pains, soothes our angers, calms our bodies, and leaves us with a feeling of freedom, contentment, and inner peace.

It is likely that every normal human brain has the inherent potential to experience the world from this integrative and self healing point of view. We certainly seem to have the desire and the tendency to do so when given an opportunity. Perhaps that is how we experienced the world at birth, as completely unified, perfect, and wholesomely accepting. That would explain why so many of us yearn for that experience as adults. Perhaps we are drawn to such a state simply because every sexual orgasm we have offers us a brief glimpse of what it would be like to truly transcend the fetters that bind us to the tides and times of earth. We would be able to relax and merge completely with each other and with the pleasure of it all. Whatever the reason, such states of mind and spirit do appear to be universally recognized and sought after. Every

culture throughout history has a name for this unusual and powerful experience.

Unfortunately, from my perspective at least, every culture (and every cult) has also evolved rather complex and demanding techniques for attaining this ecstatic state of mind. Some require years of commitment to meditation and the study of detailed descriptions of alternate realities. Others demand a total withdrawal from ordinary life and require followers to enter into the seclusion of a monastery, to wear a specific costume, and to participate in repetitive rituals. A few use psychedelic drugs to attain the desired state and, recently at least, many groups, gurus, and spiritual leaders have begun charging rather exorbitant fees to join their “special” journey toward nirvana.

Whenever I give talks on this topic to groups of mental health professionals, I always ask if anyone has ever had the kind of experience I am describing. Invariably, over 90% raise their hands. Furthermore, the relevant literature is full of examples of ordinary people suddenly becoming immersed in such experiences for no obvious reason and with no intentional efforts to do so. If attaining this pure state of cosmic awareness actually required the mastery of complex constructs or years of effort and sacrifice, such spontaneous transformational peak experiences and unexpected transcendental consciousness events simply would not occur. The fact that they do occur spontaneously and with considerable regularity suggests that this experience actually is rather natural and not all that difficult to create. Such events imply, again, that every normal human brain may have the potential to experience this mode of consciousness under the right circumstances.

Whether all of us have an underlying ability to experience the world this way or not, all of us have good reason to want to do so. Even a brief or faint taste of such mystical or transcendental experiences seems to change people in dramatically positive ways. One momentary immersion can change a person’s psychological and emotional condition forever, perhaps even altering basic hormonal, neurological, and biochemical states. In the same way that a brief but intense trauma can produce permanent physiological, psychological, and emotional changes characteristic of a post-traumatic reaction, it is possible that a brief but intense mystical

experience can produce long-term emotional, psychological and physiological changes characteristic of improved mental health and happiness.

Whereas cognitive therapy attempts to chip away at negative and self-defeating attitudes one at a time, mystical experiences involve the creation of an entirely new view of the world all at once. This new view is exuberantly positive and joyfully optimistic. As a result of this sudden alteration in perspective, many different aspects of life become easier, everyday hassles become less important, anger diminishes, tension releases, pain disappears, and the person begins to feel “weller than well”. Amusement and aesthetic pleasure replace irritation and dissatisfaction. Wisdom and compassion replace confusion and fear. Spontaneous thought, imaginative solutions, and creative action replace stress and the force of habit. Joy and playful amusement replace sadness and worry. Love and compassion replace selfishness and social isolation. Absorbed fascination and peaceful delight replace distracting concerns. Little wonder, then, that we tend to be drawn toward such states of mind. The potential benefits are obvious.

As a psychotherapist I am drawn toward such experiences for professional as well as personal reasons. For one thing, the goal of merely getting people back on their feet, restoring them to their previous level of functioning, or helping them become “good enough” to get by, has never been good enough for me. Instead, I am interested in helping people maximize performance, use previously unused potentials, access their inner resources, and begin feeling that life is both wonderful and full of wonder. That is what I want for myself, and that also is what I want for my clients. In this regard, exposure to a mystical experience is often like the decorative icing on a therapeutic cake, a finishing touch that gives special meaning to the entire process.

On the other hand, such experiences can be the cake itself. Moments of mystical consciousness or spiritual awareness can provide core therapeutic breakthroughs or even serve as the total therapeutic experience. The cognitive, emotional, and physiological consequences of such events are so intensely transformational that they can, at times, permanently replace major depression, anxiety, and even chronic pain, with pleasure and comfort. In



# Chapter 1

## *Lighting the Way*

*That's one small step for a man,  
one giant leap for mankind.*  
—Neil Armstrong, 1969

Therapeutic change typically involves a step-by-step accumulation of small, almost imperceptible differences over time. Change tends to be difficult, minimalistic, and slow. But people can, at times, take a giant leap forward. They can develop a profound insight or create a deeper understanding. They can transcend their past and become a “new” person. They can shed old worries and enter a state of perpetual peace. They can jump ahead of themselves into a completely new future and invent solutions to problems they did not even know existed. They can do all of this and more in one brief but monumental moment of ecstatic bliss and passionate wonder.

Peak or cosmic experiences involve intensely overwhelming alterations in perception, thought, and emotion. They flood the body with a sudden rush of light, energy, or sound. They plunge the mind into a state of awe and wonder. They transform the mundane into a miracle. They then disappear as suddenly as they appeared, leaving behind a fertile opportunity for new growth and significant change. Just one of these experiences can lead a person off in a completely new direction. A whole series of them can lead someone off into a completely new identity and a completely new reality. The changes precipitated by such events can be so extensive that Miller and C’de Baca (2001) coined the term “quantum change” to convey their impact.

I wrote this book because I believe that enabling people to have such intensely therapeutic peak experiences is a legitimate goal of psychotherapy. In fact, I maintain that such transformational epiphany experiences should be made available to everyone on a

regular basis. Thus, in this book, I describe how to use various hypnotic techniques (including self-hypnotic techniques) to move your own mind or the mind of someone else toward these mystical or cosmic consciousness states.

Because cosmic or mystical experiences can have such profound therapeutic effects, it is a bit surprising that procedures to stimulate them are not already an inherent part of every psychotherapist's practice. What makes this even more surprising is the fact that this is not a new or original idea at all.

## *My Pursuit of Cosmic Consciousness*

It has now been over 30 years since I began investigating the possibility of using trance to stimulate the higher state of mind that various authors have referred to as "ecstasy", "spirituality", "transcendental consciousness", "cosmic consciousness", "mystical enlightenment", or "peak experiences". My interest in this topic began in the 1970s when I attended a presentation on spirituality and hypnosis by Bertha Rodger, MD, during an American Society of Clinical Hypnosis conference. I had never met or even heard of Dr Rodger and had no idea who she was, but the moment this radiant, white-haired, grandmotherly apparition with a beatific smile and a playful twinkle in her eyes entered the room, I knew she was our session leader.

At the time I was in the process of finishing my dissertation on the use of modeling to alter hypnotizability and was in the middle of my internship as a doctoral student in clinical psychology. I thought I knew all there was to know about hypnosis and about therapeutic moments, but I was about to find out that I was wrong. Dr Rodger gave a brief lecture on her use of hypnosis for anesthesia and spiritual healing in a hospital setting and then led the audience through the type of induction and suggestion processes she was then using with her patients.

I was not particularly responsive to hypnotic suggestions back then, in spite of my interest in the field, and as a result my reactions to her suggestions probably were pretty mild compared to the responses of the other audience members around me.

Nonetheless, when she described a light in the distance growing brighter and brighter, coming closer and closer, I could imagine seeing it reasonably clearly. And when she added a soft chorus of voices growing louder and louder, I could imagine hearing that as well. As that intense light and those harmonious sounds began to surround me, to engulf my awareness, I suddenly felt a rush of energy, a tingling surge of sensation and emotion throughout my entire body. Rather than riding that wave of energy, however, I quickly pulled myself out of it. It was too intense, too disorienting for me; it was more of a high than I was able to tolerate, it was a more rapid ascent into a field of pure consciousness than I could stand at that time. Nonetheless, this relatively brief but powerful episode was enticing enough to have long-term, life-changing consequences.

After that session I was intrigued. Even though the experience was essentially intolerable, it also was too intense to ignore. Over the next few weeks and months I began to feel somewhat dissatisfied. Like a potential addict who had just received a taste of bliss, I wanted more of that experience and I also wanted to find out how to help others experience it as well.

I already believed that therapy can happen in an instant. I had read about, experienced, and even created one or two “therapeutic moments” (those sudden flashes of insight or changes in perspective that are prompted by what often is an otherwise innocuous comment, action, or situation). I also was familiar with Abraham Maslow’s work on the therapeutic value of peak experiences, and had, quite unintentionally, entered such states several times myself.

But what I experienced with Dr Rodger that day was a change in consciousness unlike anything I had ever experienced before. In hindsight it felt like I was dissolving into the underlying energy of the universe and becoming unrestrained emotionally, perceptually, and intellectually. Although this impression was derived from just a brief step across the threshold, from a momentary and somewhat terrifying plunge into that altered state of mind, I began to wonder if such experiences could be therapeutically useful. I also began to wonder if I could use hypnosis to precipitate similar alterations in consciousness.

## Chapter 5

# *Hypnotic Events*

*Trance is a focusing on one thing ... dropping all the peripheral foci  
and narrowing it down to one focus.*

—Milton H. Erickson, in Erickson & Rossi, 1979, p. 369

The basic goal of all of the hypnotic procedures presented in this text is quite simple ... to help people learn how to experience a trance state and then use that trance state to experience one or more of the components of a cosmic consciousness episode. To help yourself or others accomplish this you will need to have a working understanding of the hypnotic process – at least a minimalistic notion of what it is and how to use it. Accordingly, this chapter contains a simplistic but pragmatically useful description of hypnotic abilities, hypnotic trance, and the steps involved in a typical hypnotic process.

The discussion of hypnosis presented here is admittedly idiosyncratic. It represents my own particular point of view and is not meant to be representative of the attitudes commonly held by others in the field. On the other hand, I must confess that there is no commonly accepted understanding of hypnosis by others in the field. Instead, there is an ongoing debate about the nature and even the existence of hypnosis. For example, Division 30 of the American Psychological Association recently published its two-paragraph definition of hypnosis (Green, Barabasz, Barrett, and Montgomery, 2005). This definition was instantly challenged and dissected within the same journal (Nash, 2005 and Christensen, 2005) and subsequently in a series of articles published in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, Vol. 48, No. 2–3, October 2005/January 2006. Whether or not the hypnotic approach used in my scripts meets the definition of hypnosis preferred by one camp or another within the field, I still believe that it is one of the most pragmatically useful points of view around.

## ***The Nature and Source of Hypnotic Responses***

As noted in the previous chapter, I maintain that hypnotic responses are nothing more than abilities and potentials that everyone has and that everyone uses and relies on every day, but are not supposed to have and do not believe they have. Within this conceptualization, the split between what you believe you are and all of the potentials and abilities that you actually are is the reason that we even have something called hypnosis. About 150 years ago people invented a magical state of mind that they eventually called “hypnotic trance” to explain things that they could do (hallucinate, for example) that they did not believe that they could or should be able to do in an ordinary state of mind. As a result we now have the belief that hypnosis somehow endows a person with amazing abilities that did not exist beforehand and would not exist were it not for this special state of mind. From my point of view, of course, this is a silly belief.

The ability to hallucinate seems bizarre or even scary to most people, as does the ability to modify various physiological responses or to endure major surgery with no apparent suffering. In our culture, the only occasions when it is at all acceptable to allow such things to occur is during an intense religious experience, during a crisis situation, under the influence of mind-altering drugs, and, within the last 150 years at least, during a hypnotic trance. Under these various “trance-inducing” or mind-altering circumstances it is acceptable for people to do or to experience things that we ordinarily think of as “extraordinary”, such as seeing visions, hearing voices, engaging in automatic movement or speech, experiencing spontaneous healings, or demonstrating extraordinary feats of memory, pain tolerance, and strength. But the simple fact is that we all demonstrate minor versions of these same phenomena all the time. We ignore uncomfortable sensations, for example, and we think we heard the phone ringing when it did not. We also experience automatic movement whenever we reach out and catch something thrown to us without thinking about it, we sometimes duck away from something that was not really there, and we may even unexpectedly remember a long-forgotten detail from childhood.

If you know that you can do these things without being in a trance, or even do them all the time, you might want to keep that bit of information to yourself. Such abilities are still viewed as *pro forma* evidence of either insanity or demon possession by many people. If you doubt this, tell a few friends that there is a six-foot tall rabbit called Harvey following you around and see what reaction you get. Young children can have imaginary playmates, but adults are not supposed to do that any more, even if it is a wonderfully entertaining use of a perfectly good “hypnotic” ability. Similarly, if you think that you hear someone calling your name when you are in the shower, and you turn off the shower to check, and there was no one there, better to keep it to yourself. Unless you are in a trance, which offers a good, socially acceptable excuse to experience such “non-normal” and unacceptable things, then you are supposed to ignore or even deny them.

Hypnosis, therefore, is a ritual that gives people an excuse and an opportunity to use abilities and potentials that otherwise must be kept under wraps, hidden in the background, or relegated to the realm that I am calling “the unconscious mind” in this text. Within this definition “hypnotic” responses are nothing more than abilities and potentials that ordinarily go overlooked, denied, suppressed, unused, or even misused. Hypnotic inductions do not mystically create new abilities. Hypnotic responses are simply examples of abilities that we do not believe we have or are not comfortable allowing ourselves to experience, except under those circumstances that we have agreed to call a “hypnotic trance”. Nonetheless, they are abilities we use every day.

One of the most impressive of these “hypnotic” abilities is the wonderful ability to eliminate the suffering that can be created by various sources of physical and emotional pain. People are amazed when confronted by the ability of a hypnotized patient to undergo major surgery, even amputation of a leg or an arm, with no anesthesia at all and no apparent discomfort. But this is the same ability non-hypnotized individuals demonstrate when they ignore the uncomfortable sensation of sitting on a hard bench for hours while listening to a fascinating speech or when soccer players immediately forget about that whack in the shins even though the injury is still there. Such incidents are perfectly good examples

## *Chapter 6*

# *Hypnotic Immersions in Light*

Vision is clearly the most dominant and useful source of information about the real world for most people. We all rely heavily on visual input to show us where we are and what is going on, to clarify the meaning of sounds and sensations, and to monitor the behavior of others. We even organize our thoughts and memories around visual representations of things real and imagined. What we see is what we believe.

It is not surprising, therefore, that light is a core element of almost all religious, spiritual, and transcendental experiences. Light is often associated with the arrival of a god or other supernatural being. Light, in the form of a halo or aura, is used as a visual manifestation of our human essence or soul and as a representation of inner purity. And a sudden eruption of an intense, unbearably brilliant white light or fire, a light that no one else can see but that seems to penetrate everything, is often a central component of religious conversions and other transformational rearrangements of thought or awareness.

Obviously, it is no coincidence that the terms “illumination”, “enlightenment”, “brilliance”, “brightness”, “luminescence”, and “radiance” all refer both to light and to the human mind or spirit. We are seekers of illumination, blinding flashes of it and enduring immersions in it. No one wants to be left out in the dark. We all want to see truth in a sudden explosion of enlightenment.

Thus, even though it sounds like a tautology, it can be said that illumination produces illumination. That, in any event, is the assumption underlying this chapter. The scripts presented here are designed to lead the mind toward an awareness of an illumination, an awareness of brilliance within the mind’s eye that eventually expands to encompass all understanding and all experience.

If nothing else, such ideas sow seeds that may burst forth in a dream or a daydream months or years later. And even an imagined brilliance can light up many dark corners in the back of the mind.

**A Distant Star**

Now,  
you can just sit there  
in that chair  
with your eyes closed  
becoming aware  
that you can become  
even more relaxed over time,  
even more comfortable  
in this short time  
than you were before,  
are you not,  
but not yet as much  
as you will be later on,  
because you can take your time  
to drift into a trance,  
a state of quiet awareness,  
a quiet recognition  
of all those things  
that I could say  
as you sit here today,  
waiting for me to say something  
that will change your experience,  
that will alter your life  
forever,  
but also being afraid,  
being worried that I will say  
just the right thing  
to change things for you,  
to alter your life  
forever,  
but remember that all change  
actually belongs just to you,  
and only you can change things for you,  
change things within you, because all I can do



# SELF HYPNOSIS for Cosmic Consciousness

In this groundbreaking book, Ron Havens explores the hypnotic pathways that can lead to an alternate experiential world. This world of inner peace and happiness can be created by even a momentary immersion in the unknown potentials that lie just beneath the surface of everyone's conscious awareness. It is a world removed from the cares and concerns of contemporary life, and every perception is charmed by a sense of beautiful magic. It is a world that soothes the soul, brings contentment, and heals wounded spirits.

The commitment that the author shows to this topic is not to be mistaken for a naïve acceptance of supernatural spiritualism. The alterations of consciousness dealt with throughout this book merely involve a different way of perceiving the world, not a way of tapping into some mythical external "Universal Mind" and are most certainly not a source of superhuman powers or energies. However, it has been shown that even a brief taste of such a mystical or transcendental experience seems to change people in dramatically positive ways.

The experiences generated by the hypnotic approaches described in this book can range from relatively mild or temporary states of relaxation to intense bursts of overwhelming sensation, or even to profound alterations in thought or understanding. Join in this exploration of these "altered states" of consciousness and sit back, relax and enjoy whatever happens.

**Ronald Havens** is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Springfield where he has taught for the past 30 years. He also runs a part time private practice and has written and spoken extensively on the therapeutic uses of hypnosis and led numerous professional training workshops.

"Ronald Havens has written a most interesting book. His delineation of the essential characteristics of "cosmic consciousness" experiences – intense light, body energies, feelings of oneness, etc – followed by practical hypnotic communications for experientially eliciting them are exceptionally helpful resources for those seriously interested in exploring enhanced states of consciousness."

Stephen Gilligan, PhD, author, *Therapeutic Trances, The Legacy of Milton H. Erickson*

"Ron Havens provides a down-to-earth guide to experiencing cosmic consciousness. Cosmic consciousness is far more than 'being OK' or living in a world that is just 'good enough'. It means living with more joy, more humour, with a feeling of greater acceptance, not only of yourself and others, but of the whole universe. And you can tell from the way that Ron writes, that he is coming from that place – one which most people have had glimpses of, and would like to experience more."

Peter Young, author, *Understanding NLP*

"This powerful, possibly life altering book is a must have. Dr. Havens has created a unique opportunity for people to follow hypnotic routes into a state of spiritual healing. The approach presented here offers a higher level of awareness, a clearer sense of being, and a new feeling of connectedness to the world."

Theresa Eytalis LCSW, Southern Illinois School of Social Work, Integrated Assessment Program



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