

HYPNOSIS MASTERS



SERIES

*"How The Inner Journeys of Shamanism & Yoga
Can Blend With Hypnotic Trances To Create
Astonishing Personal Power"*



Hypnosis Master – Russ Hazard

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Hypnosis Master – Russ Hazard

Welcome

Welcome To the Hypnosis Masters Series

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

Meet This Month's Master: Russ Hazard



Russ Hazard is the field director of the World Shamanic Yoga Institute, in Cusco and Puerto Maldonado, Peru. He has spent his life studying consciousness transformation techniques from a cross-cultural perspective. He has lived taught and trained over the last 20 years throughout Canada, Guatemala, India, Japan, Mexico, Peru, and Thailand.

He uses cognitive psychology and traditional consciousness modifications methods from around the world to break down the curtains between states of consciousness. These methods allow access into incredible regions of the psyche including the deep subconscious “dream worlds” and special identity states that are sometimes referred to as Samadhi. He trains full awareness in the dream and sleep states, as the experience of such states, are the heart of the great worldwide spiritual,

artistic and psychological endeavors through history.

The Institute uses an interlocking wheel of methodologies which actually allow a controlled entry into these explosive states of creativity and identity fusion with the natural world reliably and safely. This completely innovative combination of scientific and traditional techniques offer a ground-breaking new approach for and human potential training. The remarkable states of ego dissolution, dream yoga and shamanic ecstasy are really accessible to any who choose to train.

As well as running experiential training programs around the world, as part of his duties as field director, Russ also heads up the wide variety of continuing research programs into the nature of consciousness that the Institute funds and supports. He is the author of the upcoming book “Shamanic Yoga”, many articles, documentary films and distance education curriculums. He is a regular presenter at conferences and discussions relating to consciousness studies, anthropology, psychology, shamanism, peace studies and human potential.

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Introduction

Welcome to StreetHypnosis.com. My name is Igor Ledochowski, and what you're about to hear is a very special interview with Master Hypnotist Russ Hazard, which was recorded for us at a Private Hypnosis Club as part of our interviews with the Hypnosis Masters Series.

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

Listen on at the end of the Interview to discover how to get your hands on over five hours of Seminars and Interviews revealing his fascinating insights.

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Interview – Part 1

Igor: Welcome to Street Hypnosis, my name is Igor Ledochowski, and I'm here in this month's Interview with Hypnosis Master with a very special Master. His name is Russ Hazard. I'll be introducing him very shortly.

One of the reasons he's particularly special for the course today is because, believe it or not, Russ is not actually a hypnotist. Yet he has more to teach us about the powers of the mind and the subconscious and all the things we work with as hypnotists than almost any other person I've met.

First, Russ, welcome on board.

Russ: Thank you very much, Igor. It's great to be here I appreciate it.

Igor: I really look forward to having a discussion with you. For everyone who doesn't know Russ yet, he's is a Shamanic Yogi. He's blended the traditions of the Eastern Yogis with South American Shamanism. He's taken one of the most, shall we say, fundamental principles or disciplines that works with inner realities, inner processes and has really gone to depth in it.

In terms of his personal explorations I really don't know a person who's gone as far or as deep as Russ has. And, in terms of his understanding of the inner workings of the mind again, those processes have given him a unique insight into how people work. That's just one of the things we'll be focusing on today, isn't it, Russ?

Russ: Definitely, I think these questions that you're working with in your program are absolutely the most important questions of our time and that's why I'm here. What you're doing out there is very important and we need to get as many people aware as possible and working with populations. Of course, hypnotherapists are out there doing exactly that so I'm pleased to see the work you're doing.

Igor: Thank you. I think it will be useful for people to get a sense of your background as a backdrop before we launch into the more, shall we say, mental disciplines that we'll be talking about today.

◆ **Can you let us know a little about where you came from and how you got into this sort of thing?**

Russ: Sure. Just stop me when you want. Of course, we all have our crazy backgrounds and mine is no different.

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I came to this study because I was born into a wonderful family. I had a wonderful mother who suffered extremely from debilitating mental illness. Essentially, having studied psychology myself for a long time in academia, she could fit into any number of categories in the old DSM, but for most people, she would be considered a schizophrenic.

She had profound departures from reality and had definite hallucinatory experience in terms of hearing voices, seeing things that most people don't see, all of these kinds of classic qualities of the schizophrenic including and unfortunately for her, a lot of paranoia.

So, from a very young age, I became aware that there was something going on in the world that I couldn't see, but she could. When you look back into Shamanic cultures worldwide it's just, this type of person who would become the Shaman within traditional cultures. Within our culture we don't have a place for those kinds of people they're labeled as mentally ill.

However, in seeing this from this young age, it was clear to me that there were different ways of interpreting reality, some of which are perhaps purely objective. I can knock on the table in front of me, and it certainly appears to be there for me, and everyone else seems to see it too. However, it was also very clear that there were things that certain people see that other people don't see, or perceive would be a better word for it.

Once I realized that, this became a driving question in my life because obviously it's of pivotal importance. That was really the beginnings of my work in this field was understanding immediately that we all live in different worlds, and then wanting to comprehend exactly how that process works and what the ramifications are.

Igor: Right and I think that's an important thing. You had this childhood experience where, rather than the traditional Western model is to externalize a child and be more in, what we'd call objective or consensual reality, but you because of the condition that your mother had, had that element be imposed by schools and the regular process.

- ◆ **But, at the same time, you had this other reality that clashed with it, so you were already put on notice that all is not what it seems and you started being curious about investigating that, right?**

Russ: Absolutely. The thing is it's very true what you're saying. Essentially, this whole process of the subconscious overlay onto reality is normally heavily structured and moderated within our society by doctrination, by socialization. I assume our whole perceptual faculties are essentially trainable.

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This is why most people in our culture grow up with a set structure of perception. In a very true way, I feel fortunate that, although my mother's disease was terrible for her and sometimes fairly terrible for me as well, it did give me a much broader view of reality especially, given that I didn't have a father in my household. She was like the sole authority figure and from that authority figure, comes your view of reality.

So yes, most people have this highly structured indoctrination from their parents. After a certain age, they stop making play. Outside of certain bounds, the world of make believe is for younger children. Your school indoctrinates you in linear thought. All of this type of thing. Whereas I didn't necessarily have the same kind of indoctrination as many other people did.

Igor: Right, and just to make a point here for anyone who's listening, what we're not doing here is trashing the Western model. We're not saying it's valueless it has a great value. It's just that it's an imbalanced model because it doesn't take into account our internal reality or more subjective experiences, those sorts of things, which is the kind of balance we're talking about.

It's useful to be able to navigate through the objective world because, let's face it, that's where we're able to survive and navigate away from the bus that's going to come and hit you. It's also important to go in the internal world, which is partly what hypnotherapists specialize in and, of course, what you've been specializing in for most of your life now.

Russ: Absolutely, Igor. It's ridiculous to think that the mind and its linear abilities are a bad thing. It's just they need to be disciplined with the more open perception in order for us to get a full view of reality and also to properly enter into our fields of creativity, the depths of our personal selves, which so many people feel cut off from.

I think the disease in our society is not so much that we have a mind that you train; it's simply that we only train it in certain directions and not others.

Igor: Right. Now you have a unique perception of this because from a very early age, you already started exploring different cultures and looking at alternative, shall we say, social models alternative perceptual models, ways of looking at the world. So it's not just the starting point with your mother, but you actually went and sought out other cultures that gave meaning to these things in a different way.

◆ **Could you talk to us a little bit about that and how that evolved?**

Russ: Yes, that evolved through a couple of means. First, of course, as a young person who cared very much for my parent who was in severe distress I wanted right away not just to understand these things for the sake of

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understanding them – although that was a drive – but also to have some ability to try to help her.

I understood instinctively that much like through hypnotherapy and other psychotherapies, there could be some form of balancing for her in terms of her developing the discipline to be able to hold herself in consensual reality when that was appropriate and out of it when that's appropriate, so I started looking for that right away.

Now, it was kind of compounded by the fact that around age seven, I had my first what the Yogi's call 'Samadhi', but what the psychological literature and your listeners as hypnotherapists will probably know better as 'ego disillusion'. This is not necessarily a mystical experience; it's simply when the point of view of the identity shifts from that of the individual to a wider space.

This loosening of the bounds of identity is often categorized as spiritual by the people who have it, because there's a sense of wholeness or oneness, which is quite breathtaking. However, it doesn't have to be interpreted that way and I think it's very important to bring that forth very early in this conversation.

It can be viewed as a simple, psychological feature of what it means to be human, very much lacking admittedly in our society and very important, I think, but doesn't need to be mystical. It's just a loosening of identity so that you feel literally to be the things around you. So perhaps a Samadhi will flow into a tree or an entire vista. Now this experience also left me certainly astounded and I wanted to understand that.

So my entire educational process from then on essentially went into that. Of course, this had to be a nonlinear process. As we were saying earlier, the linear is very important and I've been involved with academia for a long time, and I place a lot of importance in that, but simultaneously, I felt that I had to get out of the school system.

As soon as I could, I began essentially hitchhiking everywhere that I could and working with aboriginal people and other individuals who studied consciousness, which would include a broad range of disciplines. The reality is, is that this phenomenon is found all over the world because it's at the center of what it means to be human. In this way, I think that hypnotherapists are really trying to tap into very much what it means to be human.

Igor: Now to kind of emphasize that point, something that turned me onto the idea of Shamanism very early in my career was hearing a quote. Essentially, when you study Shamanism just as an anthropological thing, a culture experience, and people have done cross-cultural studies so that Shamanism in the steppes of Siberia versus the aborigines of Australia who, basically, had almost no contact with other human beings until the Europeans came over.

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You check the Hawaiian Hunas, the South American Shaman, Curanderos and all that lot. They all share a common discipline, even though they may have had no cultural interchange at all, their techniques and methods are virtually identical. The only things that vary will be the icing on the cake whether, it's a rattle you shake, a feather or you call this spirit or that spirit, but the core discipline, the core maneuvers are virtually identical.

That to me suggests exactly what you're saying Russ, which is we're going at the fundamental, shall we say, innermost point of human experience, and because people grew up in a different kind of society, the way that they've interpreted would be along spiritual terms and so on, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it has to be so, right?

Russ: Absolutely, I mean I think you've hit the nail right on the head there.

There's a big difference between studying a culture and its particular cultural dogmas and systems, which is very important and useful for our world, and doing cross-cultural studies, which is what our school does and what hypnotherapy at its best will turn to.

What happens is you can look at all these different systems and compare them, and yes, you can go under the level of dogma, under the level of specific systems and look at the core methodologies that are used by people around the world. You can get a good image when you do that, but there are certain processes that are universal or near universal. Those processes are obviously going to form the core of the critical practices.

This kind of cross-cultural study is absolutely, important and relevant to our time so yeah, I think you've got it right on there.

Igor: Now this is something that you actually did in person. It's not just cross-cultural in the terms of you pick up a textbook and you read what other people have said.

You actually traveled across Canada, where there are a lot of Native American Tribes who still run true with their ancient practices. You went across Europe and in particular, and this is where you landed, in fact, that's where you are right now. You spent a lot of time in South America working with their particular disciplines also.

- ◆ **Could you tell us a little about what you learned in terms of what traditional cultures have to offer us in terms of a point of view that might be more surprising to us Westerners to think about like, maybe that could have some value there?**

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Russ: For sure, and just to be fair to my teachers, which I always try to do; you've got to give credit to the people who give to you. Some of my primary teachers were the Mayans in Central America. You didn't mention them but it's important to give them credit because they're an incredible people.

Essentially, in terms of traditional versus Western culture, this gets very dangerous. I'm going to say that right up front because, as you know, the stereotypes that we use are critical structures for our brain for understanding the reality around us so we have to use them. But I would have to say that in this case, the exception is as much as the norm, so we'll start with that.

Generally speaking, what we find in traditional cultures who are led by the Shamanic perspective – and we have to I think maybe define for your listeners– is the oldest set of belief systems in our world. It predates our historical records by a long shot and what we see in the earliest artifacts archaeologically in the world are these belief systems in things like cave paintings, material culture and finds in archaeology.

We're talking about potentially before we would be classified as Homo sapiens. We can move back into the Cro-Magnon period and who knows what was going on before that. What we're really talking about here is the earliest explorers and truthfully scientists of consciousness. I think that's important to recognize.

Igor: Just to add something there actually, an important note, because this is true, Shamanism has been around for as long as pretty much human beings have been. For it to exist in, shall we say structurally unaltered form or in other words, the icing on the cake, the names, the labels and the colorings may be different, but the core practice is as identical now as it was 10,000 years ago and probably will be in 10,000 years' time.

This suggests to me that having stood that test of time and cultures as well, there is something fundamentally powerful about how we function as human beings that's been tapped into by this thing, and that's why it's still being used.

Whether or not you agree with the more externalized aspects of it is another story, but you can't dismiss the practice because it doesn't fit your world view. Because, there's something inside of the practice that has more than stood the test of time, more so than any culture and any historical artifact, including the Western scientific model. So, there's something definitely worth look at out there.

Russ: Well, yes. The thing is really that once you strip away icing there's nothing at all going on that isn't easily explained using the scientific paradigm. This all fits into the scientific paradigm.

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Now there's a point in experience – and you hinted at this when you were talking about the difference between learning from books and getting experiential or in-the-field training which is absolutely critical, because realistically this is an experience.

One of the chief problems we have as a society because of the training of our linear minds is we read about something or think about something and think that that's equivalent to being it or doing it, and it isn't. What people really need is an actual experience.

So, when you're deep in the heart of the Shamanic experience, there do come some questions about the nature of existence. Is this experience just me looking at my own mind or am I truly looking at the grand vistas of the Universe? These questions are in the end almost irrelevant though because at the end of the day the process is the same.

That really brings me to your previous question which is; what are the differences in the traditional paradigm versus the modern paradigm? Essentially, it comes down to a few things. At its heart, the state of identity itself is more rigid within modern society. This goes back to the beginning of our conversation when we were talking about the structures of socialization. These structures are designed within our society to fit us into very specific roles.

But not only that, there is a fear here going back to, for instance, the experience of my mother of having a loose perception. Now perception, as I know you're aware, is essentially the moderator between the external world and the three-dimensional hologram that you experience as you know or the experience that I'm having right now and you're having.

We're looking out into the world and we see or hear certain things; it's natural for us to assume that those things are out there. And they are or they may be out there, but what we are actually experiencing is a combination of information that is coming into our sensory organs, being coded and moving through many layers, which we can talk about later if you want, of perceptual organization and disorganization, and recollected in the brain.

For instance, your visual field is you literally watching the action of your frontal lobe. What's important to understand is that this whole perceptual model is structured and evolves. It's trained every single day and as hypnotherapists, that's a lot of what you're seeking to do is to open up these boundaries because people get too rigid in our society. Part of the reason why is because we're afraid.

Igor: Let me just take a pause there and put in different words to make it easier for people to understand as well.

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Essentially, what we we're saying is the mind – and we know this from neuroscience – works kind of like the film 'The Matrix', where the experience we think we're having could very well be just fed in by a wire from either a demon doing a magic spell or a computer sending electrical signals to the brain. It will feel just as real.

We happen to be using our eyes, our fingers, our senses and so on, but we don't know that for a fact that's already a huge philosophical issue beginning to develop, something that philosophers for thousands of years have been struggling with.

The next step on top of that is societies have evolved, shall we say, as a way of managing that disconnect between the world out there and the world in here to help us manage that in some way or another. The way that we as a Western world currently have tended to evolve is to deny the inexperience for, shall we say, the trade-off is for safety, shall we say.

There's partly that the societies require certain roles and that gets impregnated in us. The other side, of course, is that little Johnny comes up at night and says, daddy, I've had a nightmare. What does daddy say? Don't worry Johnny, it's only a dream it can't harm you.

By doing that, what they're trying to do, of course, is offer safety from the internal environment and what we end up having is this little box, this little island that we live on say, on this island you're okay and out there would be dragons. As long as you stay on the island, you're fine. The problem is when we start growing up, the island becomes smaller and smaller. The box becomes more and more containing.

That's where neuroses come out, where fears come out, where limitations come on and so on. The box we live in is just too small for us now. In order to explore outside of the box, well, it's been so drilled into us that this is where the world ends that we're afraid of exploring outside the box, because that's where madness lies.

That's where all these other things lie and often when you open the box up too large and too quickly, you have massive amounts of fear, sometimes paranoia and all these other things going on because people have gone too far too soon, and they don't know how to navigate in this bigger world.

That's part of what Shamanism does, it gives people a toolkit for navigating outside of the little box that they're starting to build around themselves, so that they have greater freedom but also in a way that doesn't descend into the madness that people are afraid of, so that they can do it safely without burning out and so on.

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◆ Would you agree with that, Russ?

Russ: Absolutely and that's a very beautiful and concise way of saying it.

The thing we have to understand is this safety mechanism is not just an individual thing it comes from social history. As culture became more and more sophisticated and required – or we could argue whether it required it – but developed almost universally from Shamanic perspectives, which are very fluid, very open. This is why Shamanic cultures around the world have been able to incorporate other belief systems into themselves so well.

We developed very structured hierarchical spiritual patterns, which I'm not in any way denigrating. So, whether it's the Christian church or the Hindu perspective whatever, but all over the world, they built these very specific structures of belief.

Now you have to remember that 500, 1,000 years ago, people really believed in these with their heart and soul. They formed what's known as the paradigm. This paradigm was a mystically-oriented paradigm. But, as these structures grew in complexity what they tended to do was, replace the experience itself of the Divine, which perhaps can be found in the open perception with descriptions of that perspective.

These structures often times became corrupt. What you saw in Europe during the reformation, the period of enlightenment and scientific revolution was, basically, a reactionary stance to anything of question. The entire scientific method is designed around trying our hardest to nail down absolute reality in a black and white way, through testing, hypotheses and scientific method to find truth.

Now, the interesting thing is once you get to the top of the science field, if you're talking to Steven Hawking, the Einsteins of the world, the funny thing is that what they say is essentially, that we live in this kind of loose perceptual world. They're really almost saying the exact same thing as what the Shaman were saying at that point, but it's the middle field where the understanding is not so clear and people are afraid of the open perception and the ramifications of that, as you were talking about.

For instance, madness and appearing out of sync with the models that we hold as true in our society, which are the product of a specific space in time and are different in other places of the world. The fear of departing from this tiny band of reality becomes more and more socially sanctioned essentially now.

If you want to do well as an executive in a company, then you better be working within a certain kind of paradigm, unless it's a very forward-thinking company. What I'm trying to say is we have both internalized processes of fear and we

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have a lot of externally-oriented socialization that pushes us towards a very limited view of reality.

That is the major difference between Western and traditional cultures.

Igor: Just to pick up on two points you said.

First, the idea of social controls, we are under as pretty much as intense a mechanism of social control as people in the Middle Ages were. Just because we're not serfs anymore or because we don't get arrested because we're wearing pointed shoes because we're not of the right class to be allowed to wear pointed shoes.

The control mechanisms may have evolved, but they're still there. So, for example, if an executive goes to work and starts talking about the aliens visiting him last night. He's probably going to find himself out of a job pretty quickly just because everyone else feels so uncomfortable by the radicalness of that belief set that they begin to distrust the person as an individual who can be successful in life.

It's that distrust that we sense, shall we say, intuitively and we're afraid of, because then we begin to pay the price through socially being ostracized. In other words, getting kicked out of society, and in terms of survival, that is very bad ju-ju for human beings because we are a pack animal and we need to be part of the group.

The price we'll pay sometimes is we'll ignore our inner reality because we're afraid that, that might risk our status within the pack, and we can't have that.

Russ: Absolutely and I think this really touches upon some of the broader importance of your work, Igor, and the work of hypnotherapy in the future, I hope, if all of you do your job as you should.

Essentially, a lot of the time what we're doing is we're looking at the individual. The individual has problems and the individual wants to get through them, and you're working therapeutically with that individual or to, let's say optimize them even if they don't have overt problems.

However, on a broader social level, a human level really, we're faced with certain problems on our planet today. The irony of this survival pack based instinct towards subsuming under a paradigm and keeping our paradigm very narrow for survival sake, is that when we look at the broad picture, these processes are critical to our high functioning.

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As an example, our most important artists or musicians, even many of our most important scientific discoveries come from non-linear perspectives, the linking of things that before that moment were not linked. These are great things. This is the Salvador Dalis, the Beethoven's even, for instance, the discovery of the form of DNA came from a dream.

These kinds of non-linear thought are actually the key to our survival as a species, and that's why even though I think as well as on the individual level, on the broader social level, this conversation really needs to be had, and your listeners have a great role to play in that.

Igor: Another thing to follow up on that, we mentioned already the idea that modern science, especially modern physics at its apex, is virtually identical to a lot of Shamanic beliefs in terms of the fluctuation of the Universe, the constant changing nature of it, the sheer bizarreness and the complete, shall we say, non-logic of quantum physics is renowned.

I think there's one quote that says '*Anyone who knows quantum physics and isn't deeply disturbed doesn't truly understand it.*'

Russ: For sure. The same is true of most of the disciplines when you get to the high level. Neuropsych, I mean what we're talking about is neuropsych. That's my background and it's clear that these processes are occurring. It's just that the way they've been articulated to date is so complex that people can't understand them.

That's why I think you and I, both have a responsibility in terms of the expression of these concepts in a concise and easy way. There's no reason why this needs to be difficult. The proof is out there in our research literature. It's just a matter of changing paradigm, much like we did in the scientific revolution. I think that's about to happen now.

Igor: This leads me to something interesting because we're now talking about how psychology, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology all these different interrelated fields really are beginning to say the same things that Shaman have been saying for generations, for millennia, that hypnotists have been also talking about and they're being proved out by neuroscience now.

It strikes me as interesting that back about 100 or 150 years or so ago, psychology could have taken a very different route to what currently people think about. People still consider Freud to be the father of psychology and whilst he added a lot of interesting, whilst we have the behaviorists, the Skinners and all that sort of stuff who went a different route again.

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A movement that I am particularly fascinated by, which sadly was abandoned but seems to be slightly resurging and what we're talking about is the same movement that's been happening for millennia is the Western introspection movement.

- ◆ **Can you talk to us a little about how that one works and how it fits into maybe even as offering a bridge between the traditional systems and, shall we say, “modern neuroscience” as a practical methodology that people can use as exploring these inner realms that have been socially bound up too much?**

Russ: Sure. I think that's a really important point, and maybe instead of thinking of it in terms of neuroscience, which we can certainly get into, but I think for your listeners probably a more introspective perspective, which is where you're directing us, is what they really want.

The funny thing about contemplating psychology from an historical perspective, of course – you know, if we were to look back at the people who developed these theories, and bless them, I mean given what they had to work with, they did very important things, but if you can imagine a more insane society than Vienna at the time of Freud.

Igor: For sure.

Russ: In terms of the structures of the society, I mean it would be difficult. Let's just put it that way.

Igor: It was rigid in very rigid terms.

Russ: To the point of hilarity, when you look at some of the social nuances of the dances and this kind of thing. I mean it becomes utterly ridiculous. So, given what he had to work with, I think Freud did an amazing job. Most especially coming after him, Jung, as you know, he really fostered this introspective perspective that you're talking about.

Igor: Jung was interesting because he followed the Shamanic path.

Russ: He really did.

Igor: His descent into madness is well documented. He had a psychotic break for about five years and he actually did; what we're talking about in himself, in terms of how he interacted with this psychotic break in a non-traditional Western way. In other words, rather than being afraid of it, he dove into it and came out the better man.

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Russ: Absolutely. In fact, I just saw a review of a new book that's come out, which is essentially, a reproduction of one of his notebooks.

Igor: Fantastic!

Russ: It's beautiful. When we get to speaking about the Shamanic journey in this later, this is what he was doing in the course of his madness. He was penetrating his own subconscious, experiencing the dream-like realities that we can experience either while dreaming when asleep or through the processes of what I call waking dreaming when you're awake.

He was drawing and writing them out, as all of these fantastic worlds, monsters and creatures and interacting with them really, as teachers to him. This is what he did, which is so profoundly Shamanic, which fueled his work. It would be reasonable to say that Jung is really one of the truly outstanding teachers of that period certainly, but I would argue for modern day.

So, that gives us a little bit of a framework to talk about the introspective perspective. What this is saying is that we can follow a metaphorical trail of bread crumbs from the high functioning of the conscious mind slowly back into the subconscious.

Does that sound familiar as a hypnotherapist?

Igor: Only a little bit, right?

Russ: Yeah. This is the Shamanic perspective, the Yoga perspective or what I call the Shamanic Yoga Perspective. Because the fusion of these methodologies is important, which you can get to later but, essentially, this is what you guys are doing is harkening back to the oldest– and I would argue the most important worldwide phenomenon, both of self-knowledge.

Let's face it, self-knowledge observation is the root stock of therapy and from that, an intelligent, well-trained guide can be used to assist the person following the trail of bread crumbs, meeting all the fractured parts of the self, the identities inherent in your dream world and can help them learn to work with those identities in a meaningful way.

In this way, my argument would be – and I hope you take it as a compliment. It is meant as a compliment– is that hypnotherapists are really at their best they're modern Shaman because that is both of the Shaman and very much of the hypnotherapist, if they are well educated let's put it that way.

Igor: Actually, I would agree with that. I think that's exactly what we do. It's astounding how similar many of the techniques that evolved are. The only difference is we're not putting a spiritual framework around it we're not talking

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about spirits and ghosts. We talk about archetypes, parts and unconscious desires, as opposed to placating the gods and so on.

But, in terms of the actual maneuvers, the reframes, putting the critical factor on hold, the opening up of symbolic reality and so on, I mean really it is exactly the same thing, which is where I get so excited when I watch a very good traditional healer at work because they're doing stuff that we can only dream about.

I'm thinking that is very powerful. If we were to marry the two disciplines, we'll discover that each one has something to offer to the other to bring it to greater heights, and I think that is exactly why I'm so excited to talk to you about this, Russ.

Russ: To be fair about what you're saying, what I would say is that they really are the same thing because you have to understand there's a lot of variation within modern Shamanic culture as well.

Igor: For sure.

Russ: A lot of the top people in that field will be conversant with the exact same vocabularies of archetype and so on. So I think that what we're going to find sometime in the future – we have to realize we all have our culture. We all have our social dress.

So, even some of us who are more inculturated and thus, might use certain words, whereas other people from other countries might use other words. But at the top level, much like we were talking about the top level of physicists and our scientists and all of this kind of thing, I think what you'll find is the new breed of hybrid therapists, which are conversant with all of these elements.

By doing that can bring this work to a level that has never existed on this planet before and I think you made another very important point for your listeners. It is hard to imagine the power and skill of the top level Shamanic healers. For anyone who has not experienced that, I would suggest it as one of the highlight apex experiences of life.

To watch the way they can manipulate your perception and consciousness, bombarding you into new fields is absolutely the most incredible experience I have seen in a lifetime of looking for incredible experiences.

So you're right, the hypnotherapists have a lot to learn from this system and they have a lot to get from it. I think the core reason why is because they're part of it. Recognizing that they're part of it is going to spur great evolution in your field. I really welcome that because, let's face it, this world and the people in it need all the help they can get.

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Igor: I totally agree. Now something that I'd like to get onto a little bit in a moment is starting to make quite a list of techniques and so on just to illustrate exactly what you're talking about, which is that we're actually in the same field. We're going the same thing even if we don't realize it straightaway.

Before we go down that road, a little aside I'd like to explore with you if you don't mind, Russ is this.

Russ: Absolutely.

Igor: This is a dilemma in the field of psychology, which in my opinion has been poorly handled, although a lot of people pat themselves on the back and say, yes, this is the way to do it. It's the dilemma about the whole black box of the mind. The dilemma simply put is this.

We're studying the mind, but the mind is not an object like a table or a candle that you can burn, observe and have different people observe in the same way. The mind is like a black box that you can't look inside. All you sense is reactions to what happens inside of the black box.

In other words, something happens inside the black box and the person becomes happy or sad, moves something or remembers something and so on. Psychology is, basically, split into two streams. The one stream is where people who have become essentially amateur philosophers who will talk about what the mind is in beautiful metaphoric terms, some of them might even be quite accurate in terms of describing what's going on inside people, but they're prone to a danger.

The danger they're prone to are fantasies because the person, the big guru at the top – Freud was one of them. Half the stuff he did was ingenious; the other half was ludicrous because he had more to do with the social environment he found himself in and his own personal hang-ups than anything he was actually observing.

The variant of that are people like Skinner, the behaviorist who said, we'll never know what's going on inside the mind. Ignore the mind. Let's only focus on the physical reality. In other words, behaviors, and that neuroscience later on turns into the chemistry of behaviors and so on.

Now, introspection kind of stays clear of both of those things and says we get to look inside ourselves and turn an objective eye to a subjective experience, and that's actually okay. What I'd love to have your perspective on, Russ, is how you view the idea of introspection being okay. That we're not going down the route of self-delusion because we are prone to that unless we work carefully with our tools and techniques.

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- ◆ **Could you talk a little about your ideas on how to avoid the delusion problem and how to avoid becoming too mechanistic at the same time, and that narrow path in between, which is what we've been talking about all along?**

Russ: Wow. I'm always impressed when you speak, Igor. That's an incredibly pivotal point.

First, I think to take the topic on a round level, I think that all of these ideas are very important, and people had them for a good reason.

Igor: I agree.

Russ: They're interacting with certain problems in the understanding of existence. What we need to be doing right now, I would argue, is working at a meta-level to create systems that take all of these issues into account. For instance, if you're using the introspective method and you're not getting any behavioral change at all over the long-term, I would argue that you're not doing a very good job.

Igor: It's like the hypnotherapist who says oh, your unconscious will know what to do. Now get out of my office before you realize that this has just been a complete failure.

Russ: Sure. It's totally madness. People need to see concrete change. At the same time, the route to that concrete change has to be holistic. I think what we can say about worrying about delusion is really that if you're armed with the proper techniques and armed with the proper training – and this kind of technique and training does take a little bit of time.

If you want to be a true explorer of consciousness and tear open your perception of reality and piece it back together to learn it, you have to do that on an individual level.

Reading books, really honestly is just something to motivate you more than anything, because what we need to encourage is a broad scientific paradigm where each individual is their own scientist and goes through the process. You have to go through the process of introspection and disassembling your own reality and meeting what you find there.

Then, making your hypothesis and drawing conclusions from that while keeping in mind the golden rule of the scientific method, which is that at the end of the day, a hypothesis only stands for so long until it's proven otherwise. What we do about delusion is always keep that quiet observer in play who does not attach to what our paradigm is, so that, if new information comes in we

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understand that we're working within a bubble, within a hologram and that, at any time that hologram could pop open to a new space.

Therefore, we know that we're working with what are known as working hypotheses as we go, and we know that those hypotheses can change.

Igor: I'd like to pause for a moment because I think what you're saying is really, important. Actually, Western scientists could have found this exact same problem. You can point to many occasions when this has happened. This is the idea do not get married to your ideas. It's only an idea. It's as much of an illusion as the whole thing that you're trying to pop through in the first place.

It can be a useful illusion. For example, in hypnosis, we have the illusion of the conscious and the unconscious mind. It's a wonderful metaphor to get into, especially at the beginning to understand how we're working, but if you get stuck on the idea as being absolute truth, well, I can guarantee you right now you will be stunted in your growth as a hypnotist because there is a truth that lies beyond that, which is harder to define.

To the extent that we are attached to the idea, we won't be able to let go of it long enough to see this greater thing, which makes us better hypnotherapists, better Shaman, better people.

Russ: Absolutely and to speak to science, any scientist who has any integrity will tell you that, that exact problem has happened over and over and over again. In fact, a continuing development of scientific methodology is trying to get around that. That's why we use double-blind studies and all of this kind of thing because people have this problem.

Igor: An amusing aside, I don't know if you know this, but back in the days that they introduced the railroad to North America. The leading scientists of the day were predicting that as soon as the train goes over 35 mph, people are going to start asphyxiating inside the carriages, they're not going to have enough air and so on and so forth.

Now, of course, in the day of supersonic jets and so on, we clearly know that that's complete rubbish, fabrication in that person's mind, and yet they were stuck on that opinion.

They weren't willing to adopt the fundamental principle, which is what you're talking about here, which is you experiment, you test and take on both points of view. See if you can make both points of view be right. Then if that's the case, in which case you have to go and find some greater truth that incorporates the two.

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Russ: Exactly, and this is where we're getting into the meta-level of what we're talking about and why this methodology is so powerful and important and potentially will catalyze our culture in a way that is impossible for us to imagine because our paradigm doesn't stretch that far.

This is the question of point of view. When we began this conversation, we were talking about the differences between traditional and modern societies, and what it came down to is a very structured identity, which is very rigid, versus an identity, which is more diffuse and able to shift to other points of view.

This ability to shift to other points of view while maintaining the modern ability, in modern parliaments, lets call it keep your center, which would be a structured point of view that you're able to hold at will.

The combination of these features is exactly what will allow us to both explore new concepts and paradigms at their deepest levels and synergize creativity within the fields of science, therapy, art, etc., while not getting lost in the process, running down corridors, charging and making terrible, terrible mistakes.

Let's face it, we've done this many times in the past (i.e., the inquisition and other events). So it's this interplay, and this interplay demands technique.

Igor: Let me give people an example of what we're talking about here and just emphasize this is only a tiny example of what we're talking about. Don't think that the example I'm about to use is the ultimate goal of what we're talking about. This is just a tiny metaphor to give an example of what Russ is talking about.

Most people in the Western world think that their identity is actually inside their head. We are so evolved and using our brain and so on, that our perceptions come from that point. In Ancient Egypt, of course, people thought that perception came from the heart. The brain was a useless cooling organ, which they took out. That's the only organ that actually got destroyed during mummification. They clearly perceived the world in a very different way.

Now to experiment with that, feel free to just try this as you're listening to this right now. Just think about your heart or your belly button or some other part of your body, and just focus your attention there. Then imagine putting your mind there, as though all your thoughts, all your feelings, everything was coming from that point. Try to sense the world from that, as though your eyes were maybe in your belly button, or something like that.

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Some people really can't even do that because we're so locked into our normal way of looking at things that even shifting our perception physically – and this is just one example when we're talking about shifting perception – is very difficult to do for some people.

For example, another version of this might be putting your perception outside of yourself into maybe the cup standing next to you. Again, that's an odd thing to do. Think from the cup standing next to you, and yet if you talk to creative geniuses, that's exactly the kind of the things that they are doing. So if we're finding difficulty moving our perception from our head into, say, our heart or our belly or our big toe that shows the rigidity of our identity that doesn't allow our minds to move.

When we talk about the greater realm of identity we're not talking just about physically moving that thing from ourselves, into a cup or into other bits of the environment, we're also talking in terms of ideas, worlds and realities that we could inhabit.

We're just as, shall we say, rigidly tied into this Western model as we are tied into the idea that our perceptions all come from our head, rather than feeling it from our bodies or our big toes or the cup standing next to us.

◆ **Would you agree with that, Russ, or is there something you want to add to that?**

Russ: No. I think that's a very great analysis. Really what we're talking about, I think the critical feature is for people to understand that at high levels of training, this is not simply an intellectual exercise. Similarly, when you put people into a deep hypnotic trance and give them access to worlds, they will experience that whether it's, say, a regression as an example. They will experience that in three-dimensional reality, if the depth of penetration is profound.

Similarly, in your dream states, you will experience truly other vistas, other worlds. Now the experience of shifting perception, certain Yogis have learned to focus their perception, for instance, your example is in the body. They can go so deep into one area of the body that they can, for instance, change their heart rate or EEG activity, their blood pressure, all of these supposedly involuntary processes, purely through penetrating.

I think that's the most important thing for your listeners to know is that this is an experience, a breathtaking experience or potentially a terrifying one done improperly, but the reality is that it is not simply thinking about it. The shift in perception, the shift of point of view is a real shift. It is one where you experience life differently, and by experiencing life differently, you learn.

Igor: That's the key thing.

Interview – Part 2

Igor: In that little piece, you also started hinting, shall we say, at a lot of the tools that are available to us. Some as hypnotists, of course, but other that have been really refined by the Shaman and your Yogis of history.

◆ **Could you give us a sense of the kind of tools that we're talking about here?**

Maybe that will give us some ideas as hypnotists how we can start evolving a better toolkit, a richer toolkit than the one that we've been traditionally trained in.

Russ: I would love to do that, and there's a good reason for that. I hope that your listeners and the hypnotic community in general – I think they're probably motivated on the deepest level well below the level of career. I think on the deepest level, they're motivated to assist and help.

That's why you become a therapist, because let's face it I could make more money as a CEO than I can do what I do. The reason why I do that is because it is so profoundly personal, rewarding and because I believe that in helping the world, I'm helping myself. I think that the hypnotic community, underneath it all, that's what they do, that's what they're seeking. So developing the tools properly are the keys to doing that as well as you can.

On the meta-level, the most important tool is what we were talking about earlier in terms of the discipline and framework of study.

What we're going to talk about when we get into specific tools are ways of penetrating the subconscious and ways of interpreting that, but what's critical is that structures are in place to do that safely, and in a way where, for instance, when we were talking about running down blind corridors and thinking this is the only reality. Well, that is the route to becoming crazy or becoming a monster and we've had enough of those.

Igor: That's what psychosis is really, isn't it it's where people inhabit a reality where they refuse to bend to acknowledge other people's reality. That's why psychotics can be so charismatic because they have such a firm grasp on their version of reality and we get sucked into it.

The dangerous side, of course, is it's such an inflexible reality that crazy and often bad things can happen, as a result, of it. We only need to look at the whole Kool-Aid gang to understand just how destructive it can be being stuck in one version of reality, especially if it's incomplete.

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Russ: Absolutely and I think the two most dangerous examples of that currently are fundamentalist religion with a violent bent. That has nothing to do with people's spiritual beliefs. What we're talking about are people who are so locked into one reality and refuse the right to other people to have a different reality.

The other main one – there are a lot of important thinkers these days who are saying that our Western society, the model that we are perpetuating around the world right now is a form of collective psychosis.

Igor: I would agree.

Russ: Possibly the most pernicious one – because essentially what we're doing in doing that is destabilizing the environment that we live in to the point that we may not be able to live in it anymore, which is a clearly self-defeating structure of thought.

Therefore, that's an unhealthy paradigm and if you're unwilling to open that paradigm to other views, then we're going to face severe problems as a species. It's humorous that the very paradigms we're looking to open are the dominant ones in our society.

To move a little further, this is why this is so important. We won't get too deep in detail as to those meta-level structures, but let's say the first one is really what we were talking about earlier and that is having a firm grasp on the process of exploration and knowing that as you penetrate deeper, you are going to meet realities that are absolutely verifiable, which you're sure of.

That's always the way it works – you're always sure that this is real – and allowing yourself to engage in that and learn from it to the depth that you can while not losing yourself in it and becoming fixed to it so that you can't move onto new realities and understand them; that's the key.

There's a whole list that goes with that in terms of personal integrity and ethical development. If I go into a reality and I am told by a being, however, Divine seeming or maybe not even Divine, just an important component of myself that I'm absolutely sure of, that I believe in completely.

That, for instance, the key to human evolution is for all blank kind of people to be executed then I think that I need to question that based on an ethical model, which has been predetermined. We use these kinds of tools to penetrate without losing our own minds and without causing harm to the society that we're working. That's number one.

Igor: So, just to emphasize this – and this is something that Yogis have emphasized for many centuries – is the idea that you start with an ethical model that you

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worked out in terms of being good, you're being good to your neighbors and all that sort of stuff.

Based on that, you have the fundamental principle that whatever you think is real, there's going to be something else that's just as real so don't get stuck with it. You can explore different ways of doing it.

With those two key ideas in place you now have the freedom to maneuver through these different mental journeys without getting stuck in one place or running the risk of damaging other people, as a result, of getting too stuck in an idea that may be persuasive at the time but is lacking perspective in the bigger sphere of things.

Russ: Correct, and that nails two out of three of the biggies that I would like to cover here. What you're talking about is the fusion that we call Shamanic Yoga, because this has been a problem with Shaman historically. If you're aware of the Shamanic literature, which I know you are, basically within their worlds, I mean come on, they do really intense things but we've had the Mayans tearing the heart of slaves to feed them to the spirits.

We don't want that. We need to move beyond that and this is where these ethical models that come from the Yoga perspective are very useful. We'll leave aside any one perspective. Let's just say you need ethical training to do this properly.

The third big element is progressivity. What you need to progress in is the competent ability to move between what we know as stable or solid identity and fluid identity. If you want to think of it as a continuum, where fluid identity can go infinitely in either, direction right and left or at any point on that continuum, let's say you can inhabit a point.

This is kind of like the quantum theory of subatomic particles inhabiting either a point or being a particle or being a wave. So we need to progressively master being both the particle and a wave.

The reason for this is if you go too far too quickly in one direction, the mind will have big problems, and this is not useful for your exploration, nor is it useful for your patient if you're doing therapy. If you take them too far, if I wipe somebody into a Samadhi right away, the typical experience of that loss of self is terror, is panic.

This is why the adept therapist or Shaman, guide the process appropriate, either for themselves or for the people they're working with to make sure it's structured to the best interests and the level of expertise of that person. This is why I call it training rather than therapy, although they are the same.

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Igor: Can I just add a little bit to that to enrich it in terms of stories? I want to give a couple of examples of these ideas you're talking about there, Russ. The first one is something a student of mine talked about. He went to a different seminar where, basically, they focused on people's identities, and delabeling people's identities to the point where they have more richness and freedom in life and so on.

On the surface of it, a great idea, except that on one occasion, he witnessed a poor girl, a young mother who had her identity as a mother stripped away. That was the only thing she could cling to and she as close as you can get to a psychotic break, as possible. She was in tears, she was confused, she was terrified, and this is just after a few questions that questioned her role in life, shall we say.

It was just too much for her to be able to handle at that point in time. So it's very important that we take it in pieces. It's kind of like a boxing match. You don't start fighting Tyson. You fight Tyson's little sister first and when you can beat her up nice and well, you work your way up the ranks until you're ready for the big man.

Russ: Exactly. That is progressivity. Now the flipside –they're the same thing – is the collection of identity because you know the problem with all of this is that people have been talking about it but not doing it experientially. So most people never really defuse their identity very well and, therefore, collecting it is not an issue.

The thing is that we have to also progressively learn to collect our identity when it's appropriate to do so because, obviously, that's what you're then going to back out into the world with. This is critical, and the thinkers, the Yogis the Shaman, the therapists who aren't experienced in destructing identity, and they make all these mistakes like you're talking about, they can't very well be experienced in reconstructing, so proper training will include learning slowly to deconstruct and slow to reconstruct in gradually increasing levels of intensity.

Those would be the three major meta-level skills, and they will keep you safe and other people safe.

Igor: I think that's very important this is one of only a few times I've heard someone speak openly about that. Most of the times, when you look at Shamanism, they'll either try to sell you on a particular point of view, a particular spirit system or particular sort of techniques, whether it's journeying or lucid dreaming, all of which have a place and have their value.

What they haven't talked about is this meta idea, which is here are the principles that run through these things, and these are just expressions of those

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principles. If you express those principles poorly, you end up getting into trouble.

I came across – and I'm sure you've seen these as well in South America, where Shamanism is a bit more rampant and much more, shall we say, full on, rather than these weekend warrior things we're talking about – and you come across now and again someone who is basically burnt out. They are a husk of a person and kind of shuffle along the place.

You'd call them mentally retarded in some ways, except that's not how they came into the world. In South America they're called *acolgados* which means people who are stuck.

What's happened to them is they've gone too far too quickly and they can't find their way back into their mental apparatus. In other words, as we were talking about defusing your mind and then bringing it back to a point. So they're stuck somewhere, and they can't find their way back to a reality where they can function in the world.

That's the danger of pushing for too much too soon, which is why it's important to train properly so that you know how far to go, when to pause, when to assimilate and when to move on again.

Russ: This is why training is perhaps one of the most important arts on the face of the Earth. I say that really truly, and what your listeners are trying to grow into in one way or another no matter how professional, right? You and I as well, we have to continually refine that process because, yes, it is a matching of taking people as fast as they can go.

Let's face it, there are limited moments in life and they need to move. This needs to work. If it's ineffective, then let's not even bother. We need to move as quickly as can be done safely and build in good foundations so that the people can maintain their gains. This interplay is critical when you're conversing about South American Shamanism with due respect and love for the people who I have met and worked with and trained with and seen.

Some of them are the most fantastic practitioners you could imagine, but they create about as much trauma, maybe more, as they heal because you've got these tourists coming down for a week or two weeks. They're coming from this very rigid identity and they're dropped into a situation where I don't think many of your listeners are going to be aware of how powerful some of these techniques are.

Literally their identity is shattered into a million pieces in one night. I have met people who have been traumatized for years and years. I don't mean just slightly traumatized, but unable to cope.

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Igor: Yes and I've seen the very thing you're talking about happen. I was in a ceremony where a girl from Spain was attending. Within a short time into the whole practice of it, the poor girl had essentially a psychotic break. She was crying. She was terrified. I cannot emphasize just how much.

I think if you had given her a choice to be stuck in the middle of Afghanistan with bombs going off around her or be where she was at that time, she would have hands-down chosen Afghanistan. That's how bad it was.

Russ: Nothing in the external world can match what the psyche can give you if you're in a truly immersive environment. So yes and this is why what I'd love to see for your listeners is for them to be inspired to continue training.

For instance, through yourself or through any other means for effective training, blowing your minds and your hearts wide, but also to do so in a very integral way, which keeps them safe and makes sure that their future clients who they're basically training to help also stay safe. We don't have time to be hurting people.

Igor: In later interviews, just so everyone knows, we'll be focusing on some of the specific techniques, the idea of lucid dreaming, journeying and the Shamanic death, etc. We'll be focusing on specific aspects of that and giving safe processes that you can experiment with now, because we'll be setting them up in a very safe way.

Also knowing that they lead into bigger things, which you'll want to make sure you get more specialized training for just because they do really lead to some significant places.

Russ: Yes, they lead to the most significant places.

Igor: Now let's turn to another idea that I think is very important. We've been talking about this idea of fluid identities a lot. This is a key piece, both in our work as therapists, hypnotherapists in particular, but also in Shamanism and, as we've talked about, in my mind and as in your mind, we're in the same ballpark. We're just giving it a different name.

This is something that in Shamanism is known as Shamanic death, which is essentially a changing of identity so that you let go of an old identity. Kind of like a hermit crab stepping into a new shell, a bigger shell that has more space for it.

- ◆ **Can you talk a little about this idea of identity, a Shamanic death and why it's so important to our psychological well-being?**

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Russ: Absolutely. That is definitely a critical issue. Really this conversation today has danced around a couple of key concepts and, again, we'll come back to that main one, which is stability and fluidity simultaneously of the identity.

I think it's arguable that when we look at the underlying currents in the human endeavor, through time, whether it's through religion or through for instance psychology, this type of thing, art, music, what we're talking about is a word that's often used, transcendent. Essentially, this word is quite misunderstood when it comes to true transcendence of the self.

What we're talking about when we talk about true transcendence of the self is kind of like hitting a reboot button on your computer when, for instance, the computer is not functioning at full capacity because it's collected a lot of information and it's crashed. Maybe it's completely crashed, as an example of a catatonic individual.

So anyone on this continuum or perhaps what we want to do is see a different point of view because we can think of the software in our mind. That's what really creates our point of view. I know we'll get into that later on. Essentially, maybe we want a different point of view on a question. Maybe how DNA does something. Maybe it's a scientific question. Maybe it's an artistic question. Maybe it's a life question.

Whatever it is, whether it's to get out of a painful or unhealthy do-loop or to get an alternate point of view, sometimes it's useful to press reboot. This is what Shamanic death is it's a slightly frightening way of saying we create such a fluid identity that in that moment, we don't have an identity anymore that is solid at all. This is known as a Samadhi experience.

It's the background reason for existence of Yoga, and it forms a very strong background in Shamanism, although this is, again, where the fusion of Shamanism and Yoga really are important because it's less well detailed with Shamanism.

So this gradual disillusion of the sense of identity as it happens, basically, your perception slowly opens up and opens up, but you still have some kind of identity. You reach a point, however, a critical value, if you will, where the identity defuses to the point that all that is left is observation. There is no identity left, and this is what's known as a Shamanic death.

Now this has been detailed through all cultures around the world. In fact, many, many Shaman traditionally came to Shamanism by going through an intense psychophysical experience of illness or near death, which then triggers an altered point of view in the world.

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Igor: And we still have that phenomena; the archetype in our cultural awareness; we know him as the wounded healer. Milton Erickson is a classic example of the wounded healer, someone who happened to have a bout of polio and almost died. When he actually came back, he was in a coma for three days. When he came back, he was paralyzed from the neck down. He could barely speak.

These are classic hallmarks of, shall we say, life experiences that force this change of identity on us and I believe it's one of the reasons Erickson was such a "powerful therapist", is because he went there first. He had that whole experience that Russ is talking about, very directly, forced on him by life because it's difficult to choose for ourselves because it is kind of intense, but because he was forced and had no other choice, it was either accept this or die.

A lot of polio victims die. He did not. He chose to live, and in doing so had to go through this whole transformation that Russ is talking about.

Russ: Now you're getting to the root of it because most people don't choose it and in traditional societies, very people chose to be Shaman. Now we're at a point where we have this meta-level understanding. We have the option, for instance, within the paradigm of being a Shamanic Yogi or being a psychotherapist with a broad perspective, a psychonaut as it's often called.

We have the choice of making the decision that we're going to face this fear and master it, even become masters of this. This is interesting because this ties in to the entire...this is a model of his skull... its part of the entire experience of reality and it sits and the root of irony in the human condition.

We're all running towards this transcendence. We're all hoping for it. This is why people come to therapy. This is why people go to church. This is why people go on vision quests. This is why potentially people join the army. This is why people do a lot of things, but at the same time, we're terrified of it actually happening.

Igor: Right. It reminds me of the fundamental paradox in therapy, which is a client will come in to you – and this happens so many times – and whilst they may not voice it in these exact terms, essentially what they're telling you is make me someone else, but keep me the same person. I want to be someone different, but I want to be me.

That paradox is the reason why they're stuck and they can't change, because whilst on the one hand they want to be someone else who hasn't got this problem, who is bigger than that, they're so afraid of making the transition that they stay who they are and, as a result, that suffering grows and the problem escalates.

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Russ: Definitely, and I'm not laughing because it's funny, but I do think we should start a company and make T-shirts that say, make me someone else, but keep me the same and that's the psychosis that's going on around us.

The Shamanic death process is the actual change and actually produces results. Although it's frightening at first because the identity is usually very, very rigid, the experience of this reboot, of this opening of the perceptual field gradually creates a more and more fluid identity, which does not experience this as so fearful an idea.

This is where progressivity comes in, right? So we progress people. This is why earlier I said if I take someone to Samadhi right away, there's a very strong likelihood that they're going to be very, very frightened. Unless there was an emergency reason to do that, I don't see that that's a useful methodology, but getting them there eventually, now that is important.

If that doesn't happen, then a lot of the change that we wish to see as human beings is not going to happen. It's as simple as that. So basically, all Shamanic death is, is this culture bound word, and in my own trainings, I use the word ego disillusion because I feel that this psychological term is more effective for most people, and it doesn't load them immediately with the negative connotations that Shamanic death has.

It's really true, because this death that people experience in the ego-disillusion, the death of the identity for a short period, it not only opens up the field of creativity and new ways of thinking about the world, but new ways of being and interacting with the world.

It also goes to one of the most fundamental neuroses that we all have, which is our fear of death. Most people will say, no, I'm not that afraid of death. Well, that's because it's not happening.

Igor: Right. All it takes is a nut with a gun pointing at your face and telling you actually I changed my mind on that one. I think I'm terrified of death right now.

Russ: That's right. There's a difference between being intelligent just because we don't have this terror, and that sort of tends to be, in my own work when I've seen people taken to this space, what they have is a survival instinct, which is built on terror.

That terror drives the cascade of other personality traits, which we think of as fundamentally good in terms of; I want to make sure that I survive. But, when they come to the superficial level and end up being very neurotic behaviors centered around the acquisition of money, which is not that in and of itself it's the problems inside that can come with that.

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This is the thing to understand. We can do all the same behaviors. We can have a good job, we can make good money, we can eat three meals a day and all of these things that are survival based, without having the terror at the root of it. I like to think, having done a lot of death work, actually helping people die, that we can all eventually come to that point when the end of our life comes.

We are all so very neurotically pretending it's not going to happen, where we release very gently and we've trained to do it so many times that it's a very peaceful experience. I think that that's very relevant as well.

Igor: What you're bringing up here, I think, is one of the final pieces of the puzzle that we've been slowly putting together during this interview. I think the idea of terror is part of it, but there are a couple of, shall we say, complexes, two major mental maneuvers that people go through, which they use to solidify their reality to get stuck in a sort of identity.

It's the mechanism that triggers the terror, and if we begin to recognize these fundamental complexes and start working with them in gentler ways, it prepares us for this ultimate ego disillusion, which allows us to have this free-flowing identity and all the benefits that, that brings to us.

- ◆ **Can you talk about those two major complexes that you've been hinting at, so we can just bring them out and start getting a good sense of what they are and how they influence our work?**

Russ: For sure. The personality matrix is, basically, built around two major systems, and essentially those systems are based on either craving or aversion. So, for instance, our death fear, that's an aversion. I have an aversion to dying. This is what we were saying. You can have a preference. It's reasonable not to want to die because I've got things to do here, I've got people who I love, I want to treat them well and all of these wonderful experiences, and I want to give to the world.

However, having these things be pernicious and drive behaviors, thoughts, perspectives, paradigms that are damaging to me, this is exactly what I don't want and why people come to healers— aversion and craving.

Igor: Just to give an example of what I think you're talking about there, Russ. The desire to not get burnt alive is probably a good one. It's a healthy one. It's useful for us, but it starts to interfere when something more important comes along that we need to deal with if it interferes with it. It stops us.

For example, let's say your house is burning down and your baby is inside that building. If you rush in, you could save the baby but you'd probably expire yourself. At that point, it's a moral choice that you have to make, of course, but if the reason you're not moving into the house is because you are terrified; you

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wanted to save your child, but you can't because you have this aversion to death. Then, at that point, it's an example of how this aversion prevents you from being the person that you actually want to be.

You want to be the person that rushes in to save the baby, but you don't want to pay the price because of the aversion to death, as a result, of which you're stuck in a complex. Now there's the whole survivor's guilt. There's the whole thing of like I should have done something, but I didn't do it.

These are all consequences of the primary aversion, which was I don't want to die, plus the desire to actually do something that you aspire to, which is the kind of person that will save the baby and that's the conflict that sort of drives us low.

In small forms and in large forms, like the one which just gave the example of, that's where all our neuroses, that's where all our fears, that's where all the hang-ups and all the crazy stuff we do comes from. It's by not being able to live up to the person we want to be because either, we want something too much and we're not willing to give it up.

Or, we're so desperate to get away from something we're afraid of, that we're not willing to step into the same territory, the same ring that it inhabits; thus, selling ourselves short, and we can't be the person we want to be because there's a big scary monster in that place, and we don't want to face it.

Russ: Definitely. Now the example you gave is very good, and that's like a high-level example for personal integrity and living life to the fullest. I think it's worthwhile to do two quick other examples, which bring it down to ground level.

One would be a form of agoraphobia. Agoraphobia might come from a free-floating anxiety of not being in control, but if you were to trace that anxiety right down to the root level, then essentially it's an aversion to that sensation that we can penetrate probably down into ego identity issues.

Now what happens is that aversion over time – the interesting thing is you can never do enough to avoid it. So this is why what will happen to people is at first they'll stay in their neighborhood. They'll only go to places that they're familiar with, but that never solves the problem because essentially what you get is known as creep. That creep will slowly close their world step-by-step and next thing you know, they have to stay in their house, it has to be their bedroom or it's the closet.

So this would be an example of how a less intense free-floating anxiety and the aversion to that sensation can create a certain kind of world. On an even more general level, an example would be, say, within relationships, if I have an aversion to the discomfort that comes from, say, being intimate, and I use that

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to avoid being intimate, then essentially what will happen is that relationship will die in its meaning. Not necessarily in its structure because we all know people stay together even when it's not a fulfilling relationship, but the heart and soul of it will go away.

What we're talking about doesn't have to be life and death, although it certainly does boil down to that. It can also just come down to the pure moment-to-moment quality of our life and interactions. I think that's why it's important.

Igor: Just to emphasize, what we're talking about here, these aversions and these cravings, it's like a muscle. The more you do them, the more powerful they become.

Hence, the agoraphobic, the person who's afraid of being out in public, may at first avoid crowded spaces, then they might be just avoiding places outside the neighborhood, and then slowly but surely this creep is really an example of this aversion becoming stronger and stronger because they are practicing it every day. They've got these powerful aversion muscles.

The same is true for the opposite. Craving is another example, wanting things. Western society is based very much on encouraging the urge to want things. Our TV isn't good enough we've got to get the bigger one. Our car isn't good enough we've got to get a better one, and so on. There's nothing wrong with having a big TV set. There's nothing wrong with having a big car.

These are all wonderful things. The point is, having to have a bigger car, needing to have a bigger TV. Now you're trapped by it. It no longer allows you to live your life fluidly and richly.

Say your TV blows up or it gets stolen, your life doesn't come to an end it's like oh, my God the biggest tragedy in the world because you're not driven by that need. To give an example of what I mean – it's a tragic example that you may have come across, Russ.

I believe it was Bhutan or something like that. It was a very small kingdom next to India near Nepal or somewhere like that, which was closed to foreigners for many years. Recently, maybe out 10 years or so ago, the king decided to allow television broadcast into the country. He thought, this is a modern medium and we can't resist the modern world. We'll let them have TV shows so that they can learn from this media, and so on.

Now what happens? These people who have up to this point been protected from the Western marketing machine are being bombarded with images of Nike Trainers, of ice cream and this so-called good life, to the point where you now have 14-year-old girls prostituting themselves on street corners, not because they can't eat, but because they want a pair of Nike Trainers.

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That's level of madness comes from craving something. If you have to have something and you'll go to any lengths to get it, which is where people's crazy behavior comes from. If I have to have a pair of Nike Trainers I might kill for them. I might prostitute myself for them. I might hurt someone else for them or behave unethically for it.

If I'd like to have a pair of Trainers but I don't have to have them, I'll instantly delete all these choices that are beneath me, shall we say. That aren't allowing me to be the person that I aspire to be because I'd rather sacrifice the Trainers, which aren't that important compared to my ethics, which really are.

That's where people get into trouble socially, psychologically, emotionally and in all kinds of other ways.

Russ: Absolutely. Just to bring it back to ground level for your therapist listeners, basically, what are most people coming for? At the end of the day, they're coming because they're dissatisfied with their lives. That may be because they've got some anxiety or maybe because they want this, or whatever, but at the end of the day, it comes down to dissatisfaction with their lives.

Why are they dissatisfied with their lives? When we look at it from the big picture, it's usually because they're doing things that are not satisfying to them. It comes right down that. Why are they doing those things? Why are they in that job? Why are they in that relationship that is not serving? Why are they continuing to do the same things that are giving them an unfulfilling life?

Well, it's because the fundamental matrix of personality that we have is a being that runs from aversion all the time and runs towards craving all of the time, even when the decisions make for a life that is not fulfilling.

This is why we need the balance. It's not that you can't crave things. In fact, I encourage people to love life to the fullest, to really enjoy the things they have. Most people don't, but the thing is to make sure that those things are really serving the life that you want to live. I think if you look at it from that behavioral model, then the outcome I'm always looking for is; is your life feeling more fulfilled?

I think we can find some fulfillment by walking into our own versions. Sometimes as you know, for instance, therapy can be a difficult process. Sometimes we have to face things that aren't so easy to face, but we grow from doing them in a way that we simply will never grow from just turning a blind eye and avoiding them.

Similarly, sometimes it's worthwhile to step back from I want all this. It doesn't even need to be stuff. Maybe it's security. Maybe it's whatever, and a lot of time

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these things are very transitory, very illusionary. They can't really be had. We can only have markers for them.

If we step back from those just a little bit and take a deep breath and are thankful for what we have, which is contentment, which is the opposite of craving, and really build on what we have, then all the sudden life is not so bad anymore. I think that's effective training for people in the therapeutic context on a very simple level that's often overlooked in the quest for the breakthrough experience, which is very important, but sometimes it's very simple to start with.

Igor: Right and this is something which again, in the therapeutic community has become known by a lot of Ericksonians, like Rossi and Watzlavik, as the symptom path to enlightenment. So you're using the symptoms, the problem as the actual road that brings the solution.

A person I really admire who's had many experiences and an interesting life, when I talked to him about how he managed to lead a life that is so unusual and yet so rewarding, he said oh, I have a simple rule. My rule is this; if you're afraid of it, do it.

He doesn't mean I'm afraid of a juggernaut coming and flattening me in the middle of the road because he still hasn't managed to face that fear, but he's talking about things like he was in a career and he was thinking of moving, but he gets a sense of panic of like oh, I don't know about that. Maybe I'm throwing it all away. He'll throw it away and say no, that's it. I'm moving.

If he sees a young lady across the road and goes, wow, I'd like to talk to her and he starts getting the butterfly feeling in his stomach and goes, that's it. I'm doing it. If nothing else, because he's not letting that fear muscle grow – courage is like a muscle, just like fear is. So either you let fear grow or you let courage grow.

If you're constantly sharpening your courage muscle, it becomes so large that even large fears, large terrors become things that you can navigate because your other faculties are sharpened enough to be able to deal with it. I guess that's part of the skill that we're talking about here, isn't it, Russ. The idea of navigating through these fields in life because these other skills we've incorporated into ourselves are bigger than the challenges that are facing us.

Russ: And that's where the developed ethical model is also very important, as well as the survival model because some of the things that we fear are simply unethical, as well as potentially dangerous.

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The other thing to bring it full circle for your listeners to understand again, what we're talking about here in terms of the Shamanic or hypnotherapeutic process though, is not simply that we want to use a symptom based approach, we want to use this idea of behavioralism.

Then it comes from a profound introspection and a mastery of entering different worlds. When you enter those worlds, which we'll talk about in the coming episodes, you are faced with, directly faced with the incarnations of those problems, of those cravings and aversions, and of the neuroses that they create.

By facing them in a three-dimensional world, by interacting with them and by very importantly turning them into your teachers, we can not only disable them, which is a very psychotherapeutic paradigm, but moving beyond that into a deeper holistic model, we can have our very problems become our greatest teachers.

This resource is a wonderful thing. It changes the flavor of the experience from one of simply repairing what is broken, which actually that paradigm I find as dysfunctional as any, to a positively framed paradigm, which is, I am learning from the depths of my being how to be the best, most beautiful, giving and caring person I can be. I think when people are settled in that paradigm, there's not too much that can go wrong.

Igor: Right and this is exactly what – to come back to the original story with Carl Jung, that's exactly what he did. He went literally through hell. He had figures from hell from the infernos, coming up in the back of his garden and he talked to them. He reasoned with them. He'd ask them to show him things or do things.

This is where a very important principle that he evolved, came from which is the idea of finding your shadow. If we find that we're living a small, dissatisfying life, we're not really shining as brightly as we know we could be. It's because we put all our ju-ju, all our power into this other side of ourselves, our shadow, and by denying that aspect of ourselves, we also never deny the power of it. So we haven't got it at our disposal to use.

Whereas if we go into it, we go sometimes through the valley of death, sometimes through the Nirvana of heaven, but as we come out the other end of it, we come with greater faculties, greater personal powers and insights. That's what gives us the ability to be the way you talked about, Russ, which is more loving, more caring, more nurturing, more creative, more evolved as people, and that's because of the journey we've taken, rather than because of the information we've acquired.

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Russ: Yes and I think other words that are important are more real – that’s important – and more whole.

Igor: Absolutely.

Russ, I know we could go on forever talking about these things and, in fact, we will be carrying on in the next interviews. Looking at some of the specific tools and techniques that we’ve mentioned on a global scale so far, how to use those tools and techniques in a way that’s safe and appropriate so people don’t go down the trauma route and traumatize themselves.

This is not about traumatizing ourselves. This is about clearing those traumas, even if it means facing terrors and so on, it’s an important distinction that we have to make.

Before we go into those things – and I know in the next interviews, we’ll be looking at those in nice detail – you run a whole bunch of trainings that take people through these experiences themselves. You’ve got the Dream Yoga Intensive, the Yoga teacher training and so on.

◆ **Could you talk about what you do with people there and how that fits into the kind of things we’ve been talking about here?**

Russ: Okay. Essentially, the process is exactly what we’re talking about. Through my experience, I have just found that what we need is intensive holistic training. At the end of the day, whether that’s from me or some other well-qualified person, all I would say is make sure the person you’re working with really knows what they’re doing because otherwise you’re not going to be able to penetrate very deeply.

So optimally, the training will include a strong physical component. That doesn’t mean you have to be an athlete. I have worked with older people, disabled people or whatever. It just means that you’re clearing out the physical body and strengthening the physical body to its potential in conjunction with the mind and emotional self. So that’s an important component.

Then what we do is we learn specific techniques, and practice them progressively in order to learn to penetrate an identity, to deconstruct our identity, to enter Samadhi, to reconstruct our identity in safe and healthy ways.

Then how to use those methodologies when we leave, and harness the power that we’ve found in doing that to create transformation for people within our world, back in our own communities. Whether that’s simply the people you love, your children, your partner, your parents, or whether that’s on a more direct therapeutic process, either being a therapist or a community leader or whatever else it is.

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The most interesting part of that element is that each individual is so individual, and when you get down to that root level of the identity and give them that fluidity, it's so incredible and it's so beautiful to watch how each individual has their own totally unique gift to give to the world, to their community, to these things.

When all of that energy that's stored up and boxed in by all of those— let's call them conditioned responses, neuroses or by their structured perception— when those get freed up, all of that energy comes into play and is available for everything imaginable.

From creative expression to love to just the pure sensation of love and care, to sensitivity to those things leading to action within the community, whether that's being a wonderful therapist for people or just being a good partner or a good parent.

Igor: Just to let people know, I've actually been through Russ's program. The word intense definitely fits. It is definitely a challenge, and it is very, very rewarding. It's not something that you undergo lightly just because it's going to be like, oh, it's a Yoga camp, yay. No, this is definitely the other side of that, but it's very, very rewarding.

So, if you do have the time to do it, I think you'll really enjoy it. For those of you who are interested, first, please check Russ out. His website is ShamanicYoga.org, and there you'll find that Russ has a school in Peru. It's in the middle of the South American tradition, and you have all kinds of levels of instruction for people.

For those that want to be toe-dippers and want to just get a light experience and know what this is all about, there's that available.

For those that want to go right into the deep end, but do it in a safe way that they don't burn out and become one of these *acolgados*, there's that available to them.

Then, there are things in between where people who want to have an intense experience but they're not quite ready for the deep end yet, who need more preparation, you cover the whole range. People can look you up on the website, come out to Peru and be met by a safe pair of hands to lead them through these experiences.

Russ: That's right.

The name of the game is highly individualized training that works specifically with you in your own complex of emotions and identity, and helps you take that apart, piece-by-piece in a safe and understanding environment, until you open

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yourself optimally to the overwhelming force of what it means to be connected to reality in its true form without perception.

Igor: Again, just to emphasize, I've gone through the training. It's intense and it covers all the aspects. There's the inner work, but there's the physical work that prepares you to have the stamina to be able to do the internal work.

There's also the idea of doing this and going into your community and bringing it out, because your internal changes are only as good as – as we talked about in terms of the black box, as the behaviors that it generates. If all that happens is you sit there and go, yes, I am now enlightening, but you're still a mean, twisted old bastard, well, you haven't really done much.

So you do get the whole range there. Those of you interested, please go to ShamanicYoga.org and you'll find out a lot more about that and how to get in touch with Russ as well.

Meanwhile, we're at the end of today's fascinating session. Remember, we still have two more interviews coming up where we'll be discussing the specific tools and techniques that Shamanism and Yoga have to offer to us, as well as how to apply them in a way that's safe so that we don't burn out in the process or experimenting with things in a way that is dangerous.

Until then Russ, thank you so much for spending extra time with us today to really give us a paradigm-shifting view of the world and the work that we're doing. I really look forward to speaking to you again on the next session.

Russ: Thank you, Igor. I really appreciate what your efforts are and what your listeners are trying to do for society. I think it's very important, so good luck to you all.

Igor: Thank you very much. So once again, this is Russ Hazard from ShamanicYoga.org, and my name, of course, is Igor Ledochowski from StreetHypnosis.com. I look forward to speaking with you all again on the next Interview with a Master.

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Seminar 1 – Part 1

Igor: Russ Hazard is from ShamanicYoga.org, and in the previous session we've been talking about the power of, shall we say, the traditional approaches to mental health and well-being, and the power that it still plays in terms of the modern role, the modern need for these sorts of ideas, and how to feed it into hypnotherapy.

First, Russ, welcome back onto our interview series.

Russ: Thank you very much. It's great to be here.

Igor: I'm already excited because we left off at a dramatic point last time, talking about really how traditional forms of Shamanism feed into the same core area as hypnotherapy is meant to go into. Just because it's been around for so much longer – tens of thousands of years – there are some unique properties that they have.

They've developed some unique ways of working with the unconscious, which as hypnotherapists we could really learn from and get some real insights into the human conditions from.

I believe what we'll be focusing on today is the actual underlying understandings that have come out of Shamanism. So, if we look across the whole cultures of different forms and so on, and we take out the feather shaking and the rattles, we're actually left with a pretty decent technology for understanding people, for entering unconscious territories and cleaning up the kinds of the things that make people suffer needlessly.

Russ: I mean it's certainly decent. I think it's arguably the most advanced technology for that ever developed in history on this planet, and yeah, I think that society as a whole and us, as individuals have a lot of learn from that process.

Igor: What I'd like to do then is perhaps we can begin by looking at the fundamentals behind all forms of Shamanism and really all forms of clinical therapy and so on because they really sit under the same umbrella.

We've had many chats about this, Russ, and I agreed with you that Shamanism tends to be the bigger picture, and whether you're a hypnotherapist, a psychoanalyst or whatever else your approach to therapy might be, that's kind of like a subset of this bigger umbrella.

From our conversation last time it came out very clearly that there are two fundamental areas that Shamanism specializes in and all the techniques that fit into this.

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1. One, and that's the key thing, is the idea of breaking down someone's rigid identity so they can be free to be someone else, more than they were before.
2. Two is the altered state of consciousness that allows the penetration into the unconscious, which will allow us to do this fundamental task of breaking down the identity.

◆ Did I understand you right with that little mini summary?

Russ: Yes. Certainly, the breakdown of the identity is the primary focus in general, and the entering into altered states of consciousness is kind of a flow from that breakdown because as you break down the patterns of the identity, this is when you experience altered states of consciousness. This is when you experience altered states of perception, which create consciousness in an interactive way.

The only thing I would add to that is, of course, as we were saying last time, a much ignored process, unfortunately, is the intelligent and directed reformation of consciousness after that process, and I like to think that that's at least as important.

Igor: You know what? I have to say I totally agree with you. It's the whole idea of reintegrating the changes into the personality because if they leave totally wide open and in bliss, but are absolutely, non-functional in the day-to-day world well, you may not have done them the best service at that point.

Russ: Exactly. Now there are people perhaps historically who have made the decision that they want to stay in that open state. A patternless state, which mystics around the world have called by many names, you could call it Samadhi. That's a typical one, and Shamanic Yoga. This is the sense of incoming information. Massive amounts of incoming information without overlaying the pattern systems of your own perception on it.

The experience, whether you want to call it a Divine experience or a simple psychological experience, I think that the consensus amongst people who have had it is that subjectively it is definitely among the most profound experiences of their life. So there are people who chose to stay there more or less all the time, but these are very rare individuals.

This would be the Yogi in the cave in the Himalayas, and this person is certainly not going to be jumping into a car, driving down the highway in rush hour traffic and going to work. Nor do they probably have a spouse with which they want to communicate with on a normal level of interaction.

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Still, for most of us I would say that the integration and reformation of the identity is as critical as the breakdown. However, if you never manage to break it down properly, which most systems historically have not, then you don't really need to worry about the reformation. So I think that's why the breakdown takes precedence.

Igor: Right. So it's the idea of if you can't even open the box that person's living inside and just reshuffling the deck of cards inside there, well then there's no real need to reintegrate stuff because you haven't really changed very much. All you've done is reshuffled or reorganized their resources in a slightly better pattern.

Ultimately, if that person's going to grow there's only so much re-shuffling that can happen. You need to break down those walls and then at that point this idea of reintegration afterwards comes in if that person's going to be functional in some way in the rest of the world.

Russ: That's an excellent way of describing it. This is why really I'm here on this program with you because I know that unlike many, many, many of the systems that are in place, what you are trying to accomplish with your listeners is to actually help them to develop those skills to actually do that, at least for themselves, if not for their patients.

I think that's critical, and it's why my school exists too. Frankly, historically, the track record for actually getting into that box of cards and making a significant transformation is fairly poor. It's the time to start really getting this down, and that requires a high level of understanding, a high level of training, a high level of commitment and a really solid basis of intention, and that's what I see in this interview process.

Igor: I'm really excited because of all the people I've met, you really understand this global picture in a big way and that's partly because of all the – I mean you've been across the globe, and you've met a lot of the different Shamanic traditions across the globe.

Something that will, I think, be very interesting for people to understand is if you go off and study Hawaiian Huna, the Shamans of the Steppes of Siberia, the South American Shaman or the Mayans and so on. What they do may look very different from the outside, but if you start taking this as a big picture approach and do a whole cross-cultural study, whilst the individual techniques might vary, it's this underlying principle that is always identical.

Really it can be summarized, I think, in this idea of those three things we talked about. Breaking down the identity, the experience of an altered state of consciousness, as a result, of that and re-integrating that into the person so

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that they come back as a better, more evolved sort of person, more powerful, healthier, happier and so on.

Russ: That's exactly right. I mean if you look at these different cultures around the world, whether it's the Yogis in the Himalayas or the different style of Yoga that you find in South India or, as you said, the Huna of Hawaii, the South American Curanderos or anywhere you go, what you find is a couple of different things.

You find the level of cultural paradigm, which defines the things like am I going to be wearing a jaguar skin or am I going to be wearing paint. Now the interesting thing is we can also extrapolate from this onto our society. We tend to think of ourselves as very different, but I think this is critical for your listeners to understand. We're working within a paradigm too predominantly that is a scientific, psychotherapeutic paradigm.

The reality is just like when we look at all of these different cultures and the different forms of Shamanism or consciousness transformation, which is what Shamanism is really about, what we find is underneath this level, this superficial level of culture and paradigm, is a deeper level where you find very strikingly similar methodologies, as you mentioned.

If you can extrapolate that directly into our modern practices and see that if we get underneath the level of that paradigm – I wear a white coat instead of a jaguar skin – it's fair to say that I have a 20-year background in psychotherapy as well, right. So I also have that perspective. So if we get under that level of what clothes I wear and the words that I use, what we actually see is that the modern methodologies, such as hypnotherapy, such a regression therapy, such as psychoanalysis are methodologies that fit very neatly into the worldwide experience of consciousness transformation.

I know that's kind of where you're thinking of going in this interview, and I think that that's truly profound. When we're looking around the world and we see these same elements popping up everywhere, and then we find that even within our own culture, we can then say, wow. That's what this school is all about. Let's learn these things well.

Let's learn them inside out and really understand how to do this job right and break out of our own limited cultural paradigm.

Igor: Now I think what you just said is very important. It's kind of like when a fish is in water, he doesn't know what water is. He's surrounded by it. We're surrounded by our own culture, so unless we travel to the other cultures, we don't even realize a lot of times many of the assumptions we're making.

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What I really like about what you just said is all this stuff we'll be talking about in a more culturally-appropriate context. There are some pretty extreme, shall we say, Shamanic methods, which we'll be exploring as part of the different things that have evolved. The important thing is that all these things can be rewrapped to make it palatable to a modern or a Western audience.

So like you said, the Shaman might run around with a jaguar skin on his head, and in the Western world they might run around with a doctor's coat, like a white lab coat or a suit and tie. These are the equivalents in a modern society, and by finding equivalents that will be accepted, we're able to use the same processes, the same amount of power.

All that we're doing is we're aware of why am I wearing a suit today? Why am I wearing a clown outfit? Why do I have these things in my office? We're activating certain, shall we say, fundamental parts of the human mind in order to break down the identity, in order to re-integrate it and so on. Now we're much clearer and we have much more choice in how we express ourselves than just following something by rote and hoping it would work.

Russ: That's exactly right. You've nailed it right on the head. The fact you wear that white coat not because a white coat is the most sensible thing for a doctor to wear. Let's face it, there's bodily fluids flying all over the place. Do you know what I mean? It's like a white coat is a dumb thing for the physician to wear.

The reality is he's wearing that as part of a costume that is designed to create a certain power differential between the individual and the person they're working with. When we understand these things, yes, we get choice. We get to have a broader toolbox, and then we get to use those tools and to maximum effect whenever we choose to do so.

I think, again, that's what this is all about. What you're trying to do is you're trying to give your listeners the best tools that they can have. That comes with awareness.

Igor: Shall we just dive right into the heart of this? This is something that really fascinates me. The idea of breaking down the identity in order to loosen it up so it has more freedom to reconstitute itself in a bigger, healthier and more vibrant sort of form.

- ◆ **How do we begin looking at this whole identity picture so we can think about some systematic processes for breaking it down in a way that's safe and healthy for a person?**

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Russ: I think this is a topic because it is so interesting and so complex. We could be studying this for months and months in a detailed way, right? So to try to get through it in a short time is not so simple. So we're going to have to dance around a little.

Fundamentally, I think the way to start is to take a metaphorical individual and to think of them as a relatively normal person, which is actually who most hypnotherapists deal with. Very rarely are they completely catatonic or something like this. They feel a sense of dissatisfaction for any number of reasons. All right? They could be having specific problems or just some form of existential angst that they want to deal with.

Now this could describe just about anyone and, frankly, when most of the therapists look at themselves, well, the reality is that we all carry some of that. That is the human condition. This condition is created by a separation from the sense of unity that humans crave. We were talking about that in the last session.

Fundamentally, we are craving a sense of connectiveness; connectiveness to what, which is a big metaphysical question. You can handle it in a lot of ways. A lot of people will say we want to be connected to the external world. This is the process, by which we go through all of these methodologies for.

Many other people say it's the internal self. That's all it is. There's nothing more mystical to it than that. That's the root layer of the self, and when we feel a connection to that, we have a profound sense of unity and strength. Typically, it's described as a sense of love and compassion. These kinds of things that make life feel so rich and fulfilling.

So if we're not dealing with specific problems yet, then we can say that anyone, regardless of whether they have overwhelming pathology, is kind of looking for this process. From here we can talk about the process by which our identity, this thing that kind of both acts as a moderator between us and the external world, but also is a moderator of the conscious versus subconscious mind. This is a moderator between us and our internal world as well.

Igor: Right. Let's pause there for a moment, because I think that's actually an important realization, that the very interface we use to interface with the outside world, to be with other people, socialize and so on, is the very same thing we use to interface internally with our, shall we say, deeper selves. It's the reason why we sometimes build up walls to ourselves.

The very walls we build up to protect ourselves from people outside of us actually prevent us from accessing things inside of us and vice versa as well. So the very things we do to block frightening aspects of our personality are the

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very things that prevent us from having, for example, intimacy with people in the outside world.

- ◆ **So, what happens on the one level will reflect back on the other and vice versa?**

Russ: Absolutely and this is the key to understanding the next step in the whole process. Once you understand – the word I use when I'm dealing with students to help them get it is patterns. It's all about patterns, and the patterns actually when you look from a neurophysiological basis, the patterns start right at the level of our sensory organs.

When they're taking in information, essentially they intake this information and they have to code it. We were talking about that in the last session. Then they've got to decode it. This process of end coding and decoding occurs on a pattern basis. Now part of the pattern is a physiological pattern, and this is why we as humans perceive different things than other species do.

This is one of our primary illusions that what I perceive is what is really there. Of course, other species perceive things like other bands of the light spectrum. They may perceive the ultraviolet spectrum, or they may perceive other bands of the sonic spectrum. Like a dog and a dog whistle is an example. What we experience is not all that's there. We can say that without any question at all.

Igor: Right. We know this for a fact. I mean, the TV and radio are picking up radio waves that we don't even know exist. They seem to be invisible forces, but really they exist; otherwise, the TV couldn't pick it up.

Russ: Absolutely and interestingly enough, when you get into the more metaphysical questions around Shamanism, this is the way to understand those questions. What the Shaman are saying is hey, I'm just tuning into a different frequency than you. Of course, we'll leave that aside for this program, but it's an interesting point.

Anyway, at this level of neurophysiology we've created this basic human pattern straight from our sensory organs. Then it gets more complex, and it moves into higher level thinking practices, which we call schema and schemata. The best way for your listeners to understand this is stereotypes.

Igor: Stereotypes are, basically, mental shortcuts to make sense of the world. It's just raw data coming in and we don't know what the hell to make of it. What does it mean? We don't know what a chair is if we've never seen a chair before. In order to realize oh, this is for sitting and comfort and so on, we have to delete all other uses for it.

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We have to make its meaning fixed and it's very useful, because that way we know how to walk through doors and how to drive cars and so on. It's also where we get trapped when we need to do something other than that, but we're stuck by that one particular meaning, that one particular stereotype as you call it, where it can only be that. That's where we start getting into trouble.

Russ: Definitely. So, we create these schema and schemata from the very root level of perception, which means that what you perceive – because your brain has to filter out most of the incoming information. That's just a fact. For a computer to be able to handle the amount of data, you have to filter. Literally, what you perceive and how you perceive it is different from another individual.

This is found all the time in crime scene reports and this type of thing. People will see different events happen, and we have to recreate what actually happened from different perspectives.

Igor: If I might give an example of what you're talking about. We've all had the experience where we go out and buy something that's important to us. It might be a new car or a new dress or something like that. As soon as we've acquired this item, suddenly we find the same thing everywhere. Everyone is driving the same car as you, the same color of car.

It's not like suddenly you've become a trend setter and everyone has started to copy you. It's that your brain, your mind has become sensitized with this item, this car for example, as something of importance. So instead of deleting it, it starts bringing it into your awareness more and more often. Those cars have always been there.

It's just that now you're beginning to notice them, because your brain has decided this is worth noticing for a change. It's the same idea you're talking about here but on a much grander scale now.

Russ: That's true, but I've got to say I'm feeling a little upset right now because I was really attached to that idea that I was a trend setter, apparently not.

I mean exactly. That's the thing, and it goes on to higher and higher levels of processing as we move up the scale into stereotypes such as is the world a good place or a bad place? Is humanity trustable or not trustable? Are women frightening or wonderful expressions of life? All of these things, so we go right from the basic sensory level all the way up into how we categorize the entire world.

So now we're seeing that the personality, what makes this metaphorical individual unique is an entire system of patterns from the very organs that collect information to the organs that organize that information, make sense and meaning out of it, up right into the highest level processing that we have.

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These are patterns, so when it comes to; why we break down the identity? Why loosening perception is a good thing? Why we have a greater sense of intensity of inflowing information, meaning and possibilities when we do this breakdown? It's because when these patterns are loosened, whole new streams of information are freed up to come in, and new ways of interpreting both new information and old information appear, and this is the level at which we can reset the patterns.

Last time we used the description of hitting the reset button on a computer. Well, if you've got a program that isn't functioning properly this is the level of pattern transformation that people are looking for. Sometimes you can go in and rewire or let's say, recode the program, which would be a more superficial level of therapy, and if it's effective that's great. But sometimes hitting reset the patterns are annihilated for a time, and when they come back online, they're never quite the same because they've been opened up.

The question of psychopathology often comes down to rigidity. It's not that we don't want an identity. We've already talked about that we do need an identity for, certain things. It's a useful thing, but the rigidity of the identity and the patterns that are not helpful to the being, which form that, are the question at hand.

I think once we understand it on that level, then we can start looking at the methodologies that have traditionally been used to open those patterns up.

Igor: That's very interesting you use that word rigid. I tend to agree with that. Those of you who know me are, of course, familiar that Milton Erickson is one of the big influencers in my own career or hypnotic thinking, and he says over and over and over again – he used to complain about psychotherapists being too rigid.

If a psychotherapist is rigid, how can he help a client whose problem really comes down to rigidity? He used to say that patients will be patients to the extent that they're out of rapport with their own unconscious processes. In other words, they've become so rigid that they can no longer interact with that core part of themselves.

So loosening this up, this rigidity is, basically, the key idea behind loosening up the identity, which is what makes things rigid. As a result, you can then grow more as a person. As you say, you have more information coming in, and you can choose, okay, now I live in a bigger world, a better world, and I'll have these other patterns that will help me navigate through that. I've evolved beyond the old patterns.

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Russ: Exactly and that's what people are coming to look for, right? I mean that's when they walk in the door whether it's a Shaman or a psychotherapist or a focused hypnotherapist or anyone else, a friend. What are they looking for? They're looking to change that pattern.

Igor: This is why it's very important that if a client comes in and says, I'd like to change, but only change in these ways, and you're only allowed to do this particular thing. They're saying I only know this little shoebox here. So please only re-organize things within the shoebox.

Whereas, what they don't realize is that as soon as they step outside of the shoebox, a better answer will emerge. It might even be an answer they're aware of right now, but they can't put it into practice it's not that the answer is wrong, it's that they aren't at the right level to be able to use that answer.

Russ: Well, that's the funny and sad thing for all of us, isn't it? We all basically know, what I need to be doing in my life is I need to be connecting more profoundly with the important people in my life and treating them at the highest level of integrity. I need to be doing that with myself. I need to be interacting with my world in a way that is both useful and meaningful and creates abundance in my life. I need to keep a healthy physical body, reasonably healthy anyway.

We all know all these things, but we can't do them. This is why people are going into therapy, which is why in my own verbal semiotic language I moved from using the word therapy to training a long time ago. Because, when it comes to patterns, you train a pattern just like you train a muscle.

Igor: Actually, this is very important for hypnotists to understand. Especially a lot of us have been trained in this noninvasive approach. You don't tell the client how to live their life. There's a lot of truth to that, but by the same token, every moment they spend with you, they're being trained in some way as being conditioned. They're conditioned to a different world view. Even the idea that they have an unconscious that is going to help them improve their life, that itself will take some kind of training.

If they accept the idea, it becomes true. If they reject the idea, it becomes a lot harder to help them work towards making positive change in their life and so on. Even if you make a positive change with people, you've got to condition that change.

◆ **Conditioning is another way of saying training, isn't it?**

Russ: It is. Conditioning and training are synonymous. I have to say at this moment, hallelujah, Igor, because what you're saying is one of the great hopes of humanity.

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What you're saying implicitly is that we as trainers or as therapists, whatever we want to define ourselves as, if our whatever you want to call them – students, patients, clients, whatever you want to look at it as – are training every moment they're with us, that carries an implicit meaning, which is that their modeling.

What does that mean? That means I better be sorted out. I better have been walking the path that I am offering. If I have not taken the steps to open my own subconscious and sort out what's lurking in there and provide those profound connections to myself, to other people at least, if not the totality of existence – the mountains, the sky, all of these things that can create grand vistas inside and pure creative flow – then what are they training? What are they training?

They're going to be training you. That's the bottom line, which is why it is incumbent on us to take responsibility and do the training ourselves. That's what you're really saying and why I'm feeling so happy in this moment. I don't hear enough of that.

Igor: Yes. Actually, something you just mentioned there that I think is a corollary and very important. It's your clients will also be training you. That's a very important thing to realize because if you're sitting in front of a client, and you're sitting there thinking, oh my God, you really are messed up. You're right, there's no hope for you. It's them training you to enter such a rigid reality, in which they are incapable of change or it's happening to them and there's no hope and so on.

That's not the case. That's them being very good educators and forcing you into a world view that you don't necessarily want to adopt. So part of the self-training that therapists or hypnotists have to go through is to be flexible enough to be able to step into that reality and go, yep, you really are screwed, and then immediately step out of it again and go, yep, you really have this amazing potential that you don't even know about yet.

It's that fluidity, that helps us not get stuck with people we're trying to help. It's very important that we develop that because, otherwise, there will come a time when we are so stumped, that nothing we do will make things better. In fact, if anything it will make things worse precisely because they've done a number on us. They've trained us to accept their limitation in the way they want us to without even realizing that they're doing it.

Russ: And that's not the only example of what you're talking about, and I think you're talking about a very critical process because they're training you with everything.

Igor: Yes.

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Russ: They're training you with their respect.

Igor: Yes.

Russ:

- They're training you with their money.
- They're training you with their progress.
- They're training you with their hopes and dreams or their disappointment in you.
- They're training you with your reputation.

Everything...This is why on the broad level, what I believe in training for whatever you want to call them – teachers or therapists – is people who are comfortable, confident and competent in walking through all these different realities that are available to us as human beings, and facing what is there.

What happens when you do that is you develop a very strong what's known as locus of control. I'm sure you're familiar with that. It's, basically, placing the outcomes and realities of life within the person themselves.

When that happens, for instance, if you're used to entering altered states of consciousness or the dream worlds and experiencing all of these different de-conditioning process, training yourself to remain centered and focused through that process, then it becomes very difficult for people in the outside world that you're working with to train you into new negative patterns.

Now, if we're saying when we're working with people we're training each other, then as a therapist or a teacher what you should be doing as we were saying, is making sure we are highly trained. We have healthy patterns ourselves and that those patterns are not susceptible to outside negative influences, which of course, is the problem for most people who are coming to visit you.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: That's where this higher level of training, I think, really comes in.

Igor: Okay, so we've had an interesting discussion in terms of the ideas of why flexibility is so important and how the identity becomes very rigid.

- ◆ **Can we start looking a little bit more at the fundamentals?**
- ◆ **What are the principles involved for breaking up this identity, that we've now kind of hopefully established a clear case for loosening up in terms of becoming more successful in life?**

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Russ: Yes. Definitely we'll hit that traditional list. I think that when we're breaking this list down, what I'd like your listeners to be aware of is these patterns and exactly what they do.

Essentially, to become very concrete, what they do from a research perspective is they make your entire personality and your entire experience of reality, which from a pure behavioral point of view, like a Skinner point of view, will then create your behaviors as well.

They do this by deciding what you perceive and what you don't perceive. They decide how you perceive it. They assess the value and qualities of the loves, the hates, and whether something is good or bad of all things. They determine the background meaning or interpretation at a higher level of those things. They decide what you remember and what you don't remember.

Actually, in research programs, they've been shown to be able to silently add new information, objects and events to your life that were never there because they fit the congruence of your patterns, or take away stuff that was there that doesn't fit it.

This is a problematic thing. They can be used to help us know how to do things, like you were saying, how to use a chair. If we like a piece of music after listening to it for a couple of seconds whether, the world is good, bad or indifferent. Then the self-schemata tell us stories about ourselves. I'm an adventurous person.

I hate hypnotherapy, nothing ever turns out right. I can't sing. God exists. Spirits are real. Science is the only answer all of these things, so this is what we're talking about.

Igor: What you're suggesting then it appears, is that because there's a mechanism that results in the absence of memories or the adding of information and so on. If we begin to challenge those mechanisms, challenge our assumptions about what is true, what something means and so on.

The act of challenging that, shall we say, gospel truth whether, it means that doors have to open this way or that pictures have to be painted that way, the act of challenging it begins to break down our identity, because we're now stepping outside of the bounds that our perceptions would normally be allowing us to play inside. That's what causes or allows us to loosen up that rigidity.

◆ Is that an accurate way of thinking of it?

Russ: Exactly. So the patterns are forming this system. Now I want to bring it back to your listeners, this is where their therapy comes in because what are they doing? They're using a process of hypnotherapy to enter into these patterns

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and alter the patterns. This is what Shamanism is, specifically what Shamanic Yoga deals with, and what all therapy deals with.

Then at this point, it's just a question of how profoundly do we understand both the big picture, all of the methodologies, how to apply them and the right time, place and way to do so to create the best effect possible. Also looking at that continuum of penetrating the subconscious...

which is the patterns versus the ultimate end-point possibility, which we can discuss in this case versus this other case, which is pressing a reboot known as the Samadhi experience, which is, basically, obliterating patterns for a short time, and then allow them to reform in a healthy way.

So, this next list of traditional methodologies, now we can talk about it with a little more understanding of why we want to do this.

Igor: Just to summarize, the two key approaches are number one, kind of highjack the pattern so you can alter it. It's like getting the flow of the river and just steering it one way or the other. The other one would be to just block or obliterate the pattern to give something else a chance to emerge.

It's kind of like damming up a river to allow the rainwater to form a new channel so a whole completely new river appears somewhere else without your necessarily having to find where that is as long as it's not where the old river used to be.

Russ: Yes and I wouldn't necessarily look at them as different things. I think they're points on a continuum because, as you know from a hypnotherapeutic point of view, you can go into more superficial or more profound states of penetration. When you're doing that you're, basically, opening up pathways through the patterns of the person's perception and psychology.

And perhaps finding one of those memories that has been tucked away, that did happen that they filed away and don't have access to, or perhaps finding information that didn't happen, but they have made it part of their pattern because it fits their pattern.

If go to the very bottom of that well, what the Yogis hold as kind of the central point of personal existence, then what happens is you're below the root level of patterns altogether, and that would be the reboot button. That's the point of Samadhi. Really, all of the different levels of profundity are important because you can do very interesting things on a superficial level. You can do very interesting things on a deep level in terms of re-programming.

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Also, even if those things are very successful, when you look at what it means to be human, the pressing of the reboot button, the opening up of the entire organism to entirely new streams of information, new ways of recognizing or creating meaning from that information. It's a useful thing regardless of whether, or not they're living a semi- happy or a functional life with a less deep interaction... if that makes sense.

Igor: It does. What we're talking about is almost the same concept being applied at increasing levels of intensity. For example, if we take the reboot metaphor, we could have a program on our laptop or our computer that isn't running properly. So, we will force that program to quit and then restart it again, but we don't have to start the whole system running again.

Russ: Exactly.

Igor: Or, we start the entire laptop, and we just turn the whole thing off and then turn it on again so that a lot of the junk that has accumulated has a chance to be filtered out. So it's the same process, whether we're changing a pattern at a more superficial level, or going deeper and deeper to its root so we can change multiple patterns that come from this similar source.

It's, basically, if you think about the metaphor of a tree, we could change the leaf or we can fall it up to the branch, or we can fall it up to the trunk of the tree. Each time we do the same operation on it, it's just there's more of it so we have to have something more intense, a bigger tool.

We can cut a leaf with a knife, a branch with a small hacksaw, and the whole tree with an axe, but it's essentially the same process going on and, of course, there's more stuff attached to the trunk of the tree than to the leaf. Hence, bigger changes occur when you go into the root more, like the trunk versus just changing the leaf.

It's just a question of how much time do you have?

How many tools do you have available?

How much can the other psychologically handle at this point, in time?

When you put those mixes together, it tells you at what level of that metaphorical tree do we intervene to help that person make a positive change in their life?

Russ: Yes and what you were talking about, the client's ability to withstand the process. That's when we were talking about progressivity. Right, because if you take people and press reboot right away without proper training...

Igor: It's not a happy place.

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Russ: It might not be, but that's moderated by another factor, which is the teacher or the therapist's own level of experience. Because, as well as having tools – you know, I've done a little bit of construction in my time, but if you hand me a box of tools, a wide ranging box of tools, that doesn't mean that I know how to use them to the same level as a highly-experienced person.

So, it's not just having the tools, although that's important. You need a wide range of tools. You need to know how to use them and when to use them, but then you need to be experienced in using them. The only way to be experienced in using them is to have used them on yourself.

Igor: Right and we'll be coming onto those ideas more fully later on because that's actually a fundamental principle. What Russ is talking about everyone, is the idea of going first, as we've talked about many times before and we will really flesh it out in a slightly different way during the course of this interview because it is so important.

We understand that we have these patterns that come at various levels of, shall we say, depth. It's kind of like the tree that has leaves, branches and twigs. We have tools that will allow us to interact with that tree to change its shape and change the way it flows, and then finally, we'll need to have a sense of experiences that give us our sense of strategy, when it's time to cut, when it's time to leave it alone.

The three form together to give us our whole process of change, of healing and so on. What I'd like to focus on, if I may, Russ, is that middle portion. We've got a lot of tools and techniques in hypnosis that do the same sort of thing. What I like about the idea of Shamanism is it has such a wide scope of actual tools that do these fundamental things that I think it would be very useful for hypnotists to be aware of so they can start forming new hypnotic processes based on this proven technology, shall we say.

◆ Does that kind of make sense?

Russ: Of course, it does. In fact, I hope that you're not just forming new hypnotic processes because I really think at the heart of this conversation what we're saying is this. That as therapists or teachers, as I like to call it what we need to be doing is taking the very broad perspective and have this huge toolbox where we can apply a wide range of tools to different people, depending on their needs.

This may be that I may only do what we would call in Shamanism a guided hypnotic or Shamanic journey with this person and that will help them. But perhaps what I need to be doing is getting them to do some expression through art therapy or getting them out into their community. This kind of thing and by using these tools, we can really substantially accelerate their growth.

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That's what we're going to come to now. I'm going to go through a bunch of different tools that, this school and doing a worldwide study, both from the scientific paradigm and the traditional paradigm, what we found were the underlying tools in world consciousness transformation. Again, this brings us back to square one. Hypnotherapists are consciousness transformers. These are your tools.

Igor: Right and this is where the big work gets very exciting. I do agree with you. What you end up doing is when you have a someone in front of you who needs help or change, the mindset isn't oh, what kind of groovy trance can I create right here.

It's more what kind of groovy experience can I create here. Then the trance part of it will automatically happen if you do the right thing whether it is, for example, just going for a walk with someone who hasn't done any physical exercise in a long time that will already significantly alter their state of consciousness because it's broken down their identity. I'm not a walker, but you're walking.

That conflict by itself will induce trance because now they need to assimilate it into a new personality because they're doing it. I think that's the key thing you're talking about here. We're not looking at it as we'll say these words, and then they'll go into a trance and they'll have this experience. It's the reverse.

It's the experiences we can present to them as a result of which their identity will be challenged in a way that they can handle, as a result of which the trance becomes almost a side effect, which we can then deepen in order to have a more profound impact of whatever the impact is at that time.

Russ: Yeah. I don't want to take a right turn and get too deeply into trance concept, but I think what's really important is if you really care about the people you're working with, and you understand that they are made of patterns, your job is to help them train new patterns using whatever is the most appropriate tool.

Igor: Yes.

Russ: So, once you start doing that, then this is where you get into the realm of experience. This is where the term trance can be a little bit difficult because what they mean is not necessarily a trance. There are people who do need a trance, and all a trance really is, is a submersion into layers of the subconscious, but there are people who as much as needing that need to become more outward facing as well.

So the balance between the inward facing where we need to become explorers of the inner world, we also need to become healthy actors in the external world. The two feed off each other. So I think once people in the world start to understand this entire patterned system, and we can help to reinforce healthy

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patterns in each other, well then we start getting down to this list of methodologies that have traditionally been thought to be very powerful and transforming pack.

Igor: Perfect.

- ◆ **Shall we go through this list kind of step-by-step so people can get a sense of it?**

Russ: Yes. Of course, we'll do this a fairly superficial level, just to give people an introduction to the ideas.

What I want to say is, the order of this list is not necessarily in order of importance. What these things are, they're interlocking and some of them are more general, some of them are more specific and some of them contain multiple elements. So we'll kind of go through it but really, the only order of this list happens to be alphabetical because it comes from our text and that's how it is. I just want people to understand that music is not, necessarily more important than art or vision. The list is just presented as is.

Igor: Okay.

Russ: Okay, so art. What we need to understand when we're looking at art on the meta-level, cross-culturally and cross-paradigm is that art is essentially consciousness expressed and consciousness of any individual is their patterns. So of course, traditionally, we can use these methods to bring the inner world out into the outer world, and thereby create stronger bridges from our conscious mind into our subconscious mind.

Every moment of each of our existence, all of us are expressing our consciousness, whether it's in words, in posture, in our cooking, in our interactions. On the highest level of thinking, this is actually all art. Becoming a master of this process of expression, of the movement from the inner world to the outer world has been one of the most important traditional means of altering the state of consciousness.

We can see that sometimes in modern, say, possible visual artists, the favorites in the world tend to be the ones that managed to drag out this profoundly unifying or meaningful level, whether it's emotion or experience, and provide some form of depiction of that, and then this assists other people in connecting in and of themselves. This is a traditional method.

Igor: Just to add something to what you're saying here. What we're not talking about here is the mechanical reproduction of art. It's not the lines you draw and the perspective you have, the mechanics of those things. What we're talking about is actually the expression of something inside.

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If you speak to most successful artists, the ones that really have something that one might term salt to it, typically – I mean it's a stereotype the suffering artist. In order to manage their suffering, they paint or they draw or do whatever their art involves in order to get that pain out and, hopefully, grow and evolve, as a result, of that process.

The artist that have very little to offer are the ones that tend to copy or they aspire to something that doesn't actually come from the inside because they've seen what someone else does, and they're trying to be someone else rather than being themselves. That's the fundamental difference between, just going to an art class, drawing fruit and doing something that will totally transform who you are and how you relate to the world.

One is forced upon. This is the style you've got to draw it in. These are the lines you've got to draw. This is how you do it. This is the only acceptable way of doing this kind of art work versus this about expressing what's inside you. If no one else can make heads or tails of it, that's irrelevant. The point is it's personally satisfying to you, which means there's a connection to your unconscious processes with that material.

Russ: Yes, well, that's a perfect way of saying it. Really what we what to look at here is a couple of features. One is the expression of experience. This could be a bad experience or a good experience. I have people all the time in courses who create these beautiful cascades of yellows and whites, which are representing the literal experience of entering into a state of consciousness where they are pure light.

Those of your listeners who are not familiar with the Shamanic world and are not familiar with the depth of penetration available into the subconscious may not be aware that people do have this experience. So it may be traumatic or it may be ecstatic or transcendent, but it's a representation of a moment of experience.

Another form is a representation of artifacts, which are found inside. These would be things that Shaman might call spirits. We may call archetypal forms or a fragmented personality aspect. Perhaps I meet a shadow of self in the form of a demon, in the form of an angel or in the form of a potato for that matter.

I mean who's to say what's in consciousness, and that becomes expressed and by expressing that they bond... and a recognition first exists and then a communication with that. We were talking about Jung in the previous session and this is what he was doing essentially.

The final feature that a lot of these profound art therapy models use and have used around the world is a simple looking at the outer world with a slightly different perception.

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This is very interesting right, because this goes to the root of what we're saying. So whether we turn to Van Gogh looking at our café tables in France through his eyes and that incredible state of altered perception that he lived in, or whether it's Andy Warhol with four different colored pictures of Marilyn Monroe. Each had a different perception.

What these people were playing with is the modification of perception, which is the modification of patterns and altered states of consciousness.

Igor: Now this is not as, shall we say, far out as we might think when we first think about art work. For example, there's a modern practice called a vision board, where you cut out bits of pictures from a newspaper or magazines about your ideal lifestyle. The car you want, the dress size you want to be in, the shoes, the 2.4 children and all that sort of stuff. You paste it on a big board.

That's exactly what we've been talking about. It is an artistic, a visual representation of your dreams, your ambitions. If that vision board truly sings to you, you look at it and you get excited by it, it means it's connected in with an unconscious process. It becomes symbolic of the future that you want. Kind of like "magic" that's what the magic is in.

The unconscious goes, yes, that's what I want. Yes, that's what I'll create. So it's the same idea, and we've been doing it throughout. When we have a plan, we think of the garden looking devastated and then the garden looking fantastic. That's another example of this.

Expressing it on paper or whatever ways you mean to express it in, it's just a way of making it real, breathing life into the real world to remind you, oh yes, this is the direction I'm going in and so this is how I'm going to grow and evolve and so on.

Russ: Exactly, and to bring it always back to the central easily understood point, what that means is by manifesting, what you're doing is you are strengthening or deconditioning certain patterns.

So, I may be strengthening the pattern of my hope for transcendence or I may be strengthening the pattern of my penetration into my subconscious, which involves a whole set of personality traits such as, a willingness to know yourself and on and on it goes. These are healthy traits that we want to reinforce or alternately, a deconstruction of our patterns, for instance the way that we typically perceive them all.

So it's one of those things, it comes right back to patterns and how we train them.

Igor: Perfect. So art is the A portion done with. Let's move onto B on the list.

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Russ: The next one is Breath. Breath is way up there and one of the most important worldwide means of getting perception. I'm sure, as hypnotherapists, you've all learned to be aware of that because hopefully you're using it. If you're not using it on purpose, you'll think back and witness how the breath changes in different states.

Igor: Right.

Russ: The critical thing to understand about breath is that it is what is known as a semi-voluntary process. What we have in our physiological systems is a host of what we call voluntary processes, such as I wish to move my arm, motor processes; and we have involuntary processes or what our people call involuntary processes, such as your heart rate, such as your EEG, which is a representation of brainwave function. All of these different things, like blood pressure, are supposedly involuntary.

Now the reason why these scientists of culture, or rather consciousness through history focused in on the breath in particular is because the breath is semi-voluntary. That means if I want to control it, I control it. If I don't control it, it will take care of itself.

Now what you need to understand about breath is, basically, your system is like the inside of a watch. There are bunch of interlocking cogs. So your heart rate affects your respiration rate, which affects the glucose going to the brain, which affects the blood pressure and on and on it goes. Because you can affect one of those cogs, mainly breath, you can use it to affect the other cogs in the watch, which is your entire physiology from which our psychology arises.

This is why breath is so important and has been made into a science within say the Yoga culture that's known as pranayama. This science is, basically, if I do this to my breath, what happens to my psychology?

Igor: Right.

Russ: So this has been used throughout the world, whether it's hyperventilation, slow breathing or literally hundreds of specific breath methodologies. It will create a cascading series of events in the physiology and psychology, which alter the state of consciousness to the point of unconsciousness. Whether we breathe too quickly or breathe too slow, you will eventually become unconscious and that's an important one.

Igor: Now something just to emphasize to people, if you want to go out and start experimenting with breath work, be careful with this one because if you get your breathing pattern, shall we say, all messed up, all kinds of unpleasant side effects can happen with it.

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So as a rule, deep, even breathing or if you breathe where your exhale is longer and slower than your inhale, those are more calming effects and tend to be relatively safe.

However, if you start experimenting with more convoluted breathing patterns, like breath in, hold your breath for (X) amount of time, breathe out halfway and then pull some more in and push some more out and so on. You want to make sure you get some good solid training on that sort of thing because there are bigger ramifications when it comes to your health and psychological well-being as well that you don't want to be necessarily experimenting with on your own.

Russ: Yeah. Thanks for creating responsibility. Okay, I want that to go for everything we're talking about here. What we are talking about in this series of programs is opening up the subconscious in the most profound way. Not just in a noticeable way, but in an overwhelming way, and many, many, many of the things I'm going to outline, if they're done improperly, can and will cause trauma. This is serious stuff.

This is real stuff, and you need to be trained properly. You should not be doing most of these things with a sense of disregard because you'll end up hurting yourself or hurting someone.

Igor: Just rest assured that in the next part, the final part of this interview, we will be covering specific techniques and looking at how to use them safely so that you can start embarking on your own personal journeys in a way that's safe.

Then if you decide you want to go further and find more guidance, you can do that, or if you're happy with those processes as a nice starting point, then you can at least start with that and have something to go with that's going to be safe and useful for you to use.

Russ: Definitely. At a basic level, this is the most incredibly therapeutic thing that I'm aware of. It's just we don't necessarily want you cheering that exposure to the elements is a good thing so you're going to lie on top of a glacier naked. I mean we're assuming you have a certain level of intelligence, but it needs to be reinforced.

Igor: For sure.

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Igor: So, we understand the importance of breath in that case.

◆ **What's the next one on your list?**

Russ: Costume. When we're talking about costume, we need to step out of the obvious Shamanic kind of bird and animal masks, like we were talking about earlier. We're talking about a doctor's jacket and we're talking about Priest's robes, makeup and tap shoes. We're talking about power suits. We're talking about our favorite pair of jeans with the hole in them that make them so comfortable.

Even street fashion right, that's a form of costume that's created. It's not just to create like an identity bond with some cultures, but of course, that is one of our patterns, right. It's a high level cognitive pattern I am this kind of person.

Igor: Right. I am an artist. I have to dress this way. I'm a goth, I've got to dress like a vampire. I am in the military academy I've got to have my crew cut. These are all symbols of belonging to a particular group. What you're saying is, I am of this identity world, treat me as this kind of person.

Russ: Exactly. So understanding that what we are using in terms of our appearance, in terms of our expression – see, this is really a subcategory of art. It's a form of expression from the inside. Now what we need to understand is these things all move from in to out and out to in.

What I mean by that is, yes, I'm saying that I'm defining myself as this kind of person, and that is a pattern, but on a subtle level, by doing that, I push that back into myself and become that.

Igor: Yes. Just to give an example of that, an unpleasant version, but this has also very positive potential. You're probably familiar, Russ, with the Stanford Prison trial where you had students dressing up as prisoners and guards, and they went through this whole ritual of arresting the so-called prisoners, trying them and putting them in a make-shift prison.

Originally, they wanted to study how prison dynamics work, and they had to end up canceling this study after a few days in because of the human rights abuses going on. People going on hunger, starvation diets, being treated cruelly and so on. This is at Stanford University where the supposed cream of the crop of American kids would go to study.

This comes down to them stepping into the role based on their costume. They got mirrored shades. They got the CHIP style uniform, the jack boots and all the

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rest of it, and they started living up to that role. So this idea of how you dress will penetrate inside and reinforce identity. It is absolutely true. If done incorrectly, it can be very powerful negatively, but if done correctly, it can also be very empowering in a positive way.

Russ: Exactly. Again, when we're talking costume, it's not just clothes. It's any form of expression. So, essentially, this is why this can give us a little more insight into why say, a Haida Shaman in the West Coast of North America might wear a raven mask. Because they're trying to push that identity back as much as trying to push it out to other people who are present, they're using it to alter their own state of consciousness.

Igor: Here's another example of that in a more, shall we say, Western version. A theater workshop I read about was doing this with some profound and sometimes long-lasting impact on people. They were using masks, and these were expression masks. The masks had a particular expression frozen on them, and the person running this particular workshop chose, shall we say, incongruent masks for their actors.

So they put masks on the different actors that the theater director knew really didn't match the person's personality. Someone who was very meek and mild suddenly had this terrifically angry, powerful mask and so on.

The way they would activate these masks is they would put a mirror in front of them and have the person stare at the mask, stare at the expression and then start to spontaneously come up with material, ways of moving, expressing and so on.

Then they reported that halfway into this workshop, a whole bunch of actors had to rip the mask off their faces because they were getting so scared by the results. They were entering these roles so fully that they frightening themselves, which is going back to what you were talking about before, Russ. The idea of how much change can a person handle at any one time.

Russ: Yeah, and this is the thing. In our culture, a lot of these forms really because of the poor level of understanding people naturally are like oh, that's not a very important thing, but it is amazing how powerful these are when they are used correctly. Your example of the university experiment is really important. That was so extreme that we're not allowed to carry out that kind of experiment. That is now considered unethical.

Similarly, in military training, they're using costuming specifically and directedly in order to break down the psychology of the people who are participating at a very profound level. So if you take the right kind of person who's become very rigid in their identity, and you expose them to some of these methodologies, you can really have a strong effect and this is why it's important to respect

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these methodologies and recognize that the right kind of person can snap under these kinds of conditions.

Igor:

- ◆ **Is there anything else you want to say about costumes, or should we move on to the next idea?**

Russ: We'll move on. The next one is exposure to the elements. There was a time when we didn't always have the option of total climate control as we do now for most of us. So in that time, these experimenters of consciousness, whether you call them the Shaman, or the psychonauts if you will. They noticed that the variations in temperature and moisture and comfort had physiological repercussions on the body.

So, exposing oneself to variations in the environment has always been a very important method of breaking down the identity and opening up the patterns, because it happens on a physiological level. It also taps into very root level patterns, such as loss of personal security, loss of comfort, and this brings a lot of emotional trauma to the surface.

I've seen this a lot. We perform, with proper lead-up training, vision class. It is amazing what happens to people who can have full visionary experiences, the kind that we would normally associate with the psychoactive medicines, for example, without any psychoactive medicines simply by solitary exposure to the elements and maybe some other qualities, which we'll get into later.

Igor: Again, just to emphasize for those of you who don't think that's necessarily possible, all you have to do is go through the literature, and you find all these sensory deprivation studies. When you get put into floatation tanks and you have neutral sounds buzzed in and so on. That's one version of exposure to the elements.

Actually, shall we say unexposure to the elements because you're putting people in such an artificial environment, their minds can't cope. What ends up happening is they start having hallucinations both physical, auditory, visual. The whole works. That's just after a couple of hours in a sensory deprivation module.

The opposite is also true. Extreme conditions like the kinds of things that Russ is talking about. By extreme, by the way, we're not talking about the proverbial naked man on the glacier. We're talking about extreme for you. If you're used to a relatively sedentary lifestyle in a nicely carpeted, centrally heated home, then maybe just being outside on a chilly day for longer than you'd be willing to, that will already start triggering your mind into these altered states and these altered experiences. So you don't have to go to a place where it's risking things, where it's unhealthy for you in order to get the impact.

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Russ: That's very true. It's a question of continuum of penetration. Historically, Yogis would go and live on a glacier wearing a loincloth.

Igor: Absolutely. Yes.

Russ: Some of those people would have died. So I'm not suggesting that that's the smartest way of doing it and, certainly, we would not do that in our school. I think that life is a precious thing, and it's to be respected. So we want to do these things in a meaningful way that creates true results, but in a way that is healthy for the organism. That's the entire point of the exercise. It's the point of therapy.

Igor: Right. So we come back to the central point we've done again, which is a lot of these things might seem trivial when we first come across them, but then we actually realize that they can be quite traumatic if done inappropriately. So it's just finding the right level at which – and let's face it, a little bit of common sense will tell us that sitting naked on the glacier is not the most sensible way of starting.

Versus maybe challenging yourself in terms of what environments you go to if you like a warm climate, maybe going to a colder climate and vice versa. Challenging yourself just by some more mild climate exposures. That in itself might be enough to start triggering that whole process.

Then when you start adding things together, like the art work and the break work and all the other bits and pieces, they start collecting into a more powerful pattern of change overall.

Russ: Exactly. I'm going to go on to the next one, which is fasting. This is nearly ubiquitous when you look around the world. This is one of the ones – some of them are more common in some places and less in others. Fasting in some form we have to understand what that means. That means a restriction of some kind in the intake into the body.

Now this can be total and extreme and long or, say, partial, like you can't eat this and this, or it could include water or not. So, basically, again, much like exposure to the elements, this works on a couple of different levels because it's going to profoundly affect your physiology. Let's face it, you will die. If you go long enough, you'll die. Just like with exposure.

What will happen is people will use this to go into extreme visionary states. By visionary, we're going to get into this later when we're talking about more Shamanic dreaming or dream wheel, which is the heart and soul of this entire process which is, basically, entering into the subconscious, building pathways to whether or you're asleep.

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What will happen is, when you enter into a visionary experience the subconscious is expressed and becomes your waking reality, so people will see things. They will see perhaps their grandfather who's passed away or is alive, but let's just say that person is not there in physical body. They may see colors, they may see patterns, they may see information. We gave the example before of scientific discovery by direct visionary experience. This kind of thing.

So fasting will create this experience at a high level because of the physiological changes to the body. However, it also creates changes to the higher level personality patterns because it can, like exposure to the elements, it rocks fundamental needs and conditioned yearnings, such as survival, such as comfort, such as glucose to the brain and the emotional state that, that brings about.

By doing that you get a reset of these patterns, altered states of consciousness. This is also a very discipline-based practice, which typically helps people to, let's call it stand up tall. A lot of people who are having a lot of problems, this kind of discipline will help them to stand up and feel more secure, and this type of thing.

This is used by the Shaman, the healer, the psychonaut, the psychotherapist, the hypnotherapist to develop the inner strength, will and health, to be able to penetrate more and more deeply into their own subconscious and the crazy world that exists there, right? So this is how these kinds of processes work, and this is the practitioner both individually and as a teacher.

Igor: Perfect. Again, it goes without saying that fasting has to be done under the right guidelines, and there are a lot of medical things and implications going on. So don't just dive into it, folks. If you try it, make sure you do it properly and under proper medical supervision as well.

Russ: Definitely. I mean certainly you need a medical check if you have a particular pathology, but at the very least, you want to be working with people who know what they're doing.

Igor: So let's move onto the next one on the list.

◆ What would that be?

Russ: That would be medicine. Now medicine is an incredibly controversial subject in our modern time in our modern world, and it's fraught with, well, I would call it insanity because the Western paradigm from which myself and most of your listeners will originate has a very conflicted view of medicine. We are currently engaging in the greatest expenditure in history in terms of what's known as a war on drugs.

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These would be negatively perceived medicines. Simultaneously the population is consuming positively-viewed medicines, such as antidepressants and all of these other perception and consciousness altering materials at rates that we have never seen before.

So we're in a profoundly conflicted state. This is important to talk about because it's used and many people come to therapy already on medicines so you better be aware of their impact. Also because there's a very specific and interesting phenomenon that goes around in the traditional cultures around the world, and in traditional medicines, which is certainly interesting to talk about very briefly within the context of their obviously consciousness altering properties.

Okay, so I'll go from there. I don't think it even needs to be said that medicines can alter perception. Medicines can alter consciousness. This is why we take them in their synthetic forms or sometimes in their natural forms. I don't need to get too far into that. Many of the traditional medicines create these profound visionary experiences, penetrations into the subconscious, reorganizations of the patterns of consciousness. This is all true and we'll just take it that people can understand that.

What is important to understand in terms of traditional medicines is that the true medicines around the world – let's talk about the Ayahuasca of the Amazonian region, the San Pedro of the Andean region, the Peyote of the Central American region. These medicines work on a different principle than we are used to, and they come back to our discussion in the last program about craving and aversion. This is a very important point for therapists to understand because, again, many of their patients will be coming in with medicine use of some kind in the background.

The difference between modern allopathic or Western medicine use and traditional medicine use is very simple. Mainly the Western medicine use is based around the suppression of symptoms or the alleviation of symptoms. What we're talking about is this individual is having a lot of emotional discomfort, so we will give you a medicine that will reduce your emotional discomfort and experience of it. In the same way as an aspirin reduces our experience of pain.

Igor: Right or an antidepressant reduces the experience of emotions in general in order to stop the person suffering from the depressive element of the emotions.

Russ: This is the point. The traditional medicines take a different perspective. They're based around bringing the person in contact with the roots of their symptom, the reason why their symptom exists, and because they're predominantly

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psychoactive, although they do have important physiological physical effects as well, these are the psychological patterns and processes.

For example, your depressive case on antidepressants, the antidepressant is, basically, leveling out or negating the connection to the subconscious to allow an alleviation of the experience of uncomfortable nature, whereas the traditional medicine does the opposite. It puts you in contact with that experience, and this is why they're always done with a Shaman or a facilitator until the person has some practice.

They put you in contact at excruciating levels of contact with those very elements, whether they are pleasurable or unpleasurable, but there's always a mix. Always there is an uncomfortable element in the traditional medicines. What this does is it makes the person sit in it.

Igor: Just to emphasize what you're talking about here, for people who might not be conversant with the whole principle here. To put it into a more Western parlance (way of speaking), shall we say. What we're talking about with the traditional medicines, take an anti-depressant as an example of, shall we say, modern medicines.

By masking the symptoms, which are the feelings of depression and so on because of being more divorced from the unconscious mind that's a temporary measure. It's like putting a plastic cast on the leg, and there are times when it's appropriate. It has its place.

The problem is you can't live the rest of your life with a splinted or a leg in a plastic cast because it was broken at one point. The whole point of it is it maintains enough stability so it can start healing, and then you take it off again.

If you're just on antidepressants and you do nothing else, well, there is no resolution. The underlying conditions and everything else are still going on. So either, you take drugs for the rest of your life and the underlying things still carry on. Sometimes you might even get worse, which means you need more powerful drugs and so things can escalate.

The reverse approach is the one that Russ is describing, where you're saying okay, there's something that you're not confronting there's something that you're not facing. Let's go find it. This approach to the medicinal approach, we're going to go and say, okay, here's something. Face it. By facing it and resolving it, that thing no longer has power over you, which means whatever debilitation you were experience beforehand is no longer there.

It's like have a recurring nightmare and instead of running away from the creature that's chasing you, you turn around and you chase it until you've learned whatever you need to learn or grown whatever you've need to grow,

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and then that recurring nightmare no longer follows you. You don't have to take drugs to stop your "dreaming." You're now managing it by making the reason for it existing, by dissolving that in the first place.

- ◆ **Would that be a relatively accurate way of rephrasing what you've just been talking about?**

Russ: That's an extremely accurate way of phrasing it. I think what is important to understand is this entire process is the process of therapy. Now the process of therapy, what we've said is there are many, many tools that can be used by highly qualified and experienced practitioners. The medicines are not unnecessary tools but there are other tools in the box that can be used.

What is important to understand about the medicines is they are a profound accelerant. We were talking about penetration of the subconscious, right? If you want to think of your conscious mind as a little space capsule. Go in there and maybe you're using hypnotherapy to assist the space capsule and navigating or penetrating, maybe you're using any number of other techniques. Less important to understand about the medicines are they're a huge booster rocket on the back of that space capsule.

So they can be extremely useful, extremely useful. The thing is though, whose navigating? If that individual is not capable of self-navigation with a booster rocket on the back of their capsule, then you better be. This is why traditionally there's a facilitator someone who is incredibly experienced in the depths of the subconscious.

This is why the Shaman – I mean really when you look at the top level Shaman in the world, they have an understanding of the root levels of the subconscious mind and of perception that very few, if any that I've ever met. I would say none, personally having worked in this field for a very long time Western therapeutic individuals have purely.

Because they're flying around with these booster rockets on going to the root level of consciousness, often passing into that core area, which we've kind of talked about as Samadhi or the reboot button, dissolving their identities completely and dissolving the identities of others completely.

The reason why I'm saying this is I want your listeners to understand that traditional medicines, used properly, can be very effective. There have been traditional medicines in other cultures for millennia. However, to use them without experience and without direction is arguably a foolish thing to do, and I do not advocate that.

I advocate high level, non-medicinal training and perhaps if you choose to explore other cultures where the practitioners are available or, say, our school

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is in Peru right now, and it is both legal and common and there are highly experienced faculty that's different. But to just go out and randomly experiment, or worse give it to your patients without knowing what you're doing, is a big mistake.

Igor: Right. Just to use the rocket booster analogy, if you don't even know how to use a rocket booster, it could explode halfway through. It could ram you right into a moon or the Sun or something like that. So there are a lot of things that could go wrong, and this is not for people who want to be dabblers.

This is really something that is a specialty niche on its own, but it's something that has to be mentioned because it's part of many of the Shamanic traditions. So we need to understand how it fits into the general picture.

Russ: Absolutely and understanding the way the Westerners use medicine, I think, is very relevant to our conversation, which is the suppression and disassociation from the deep levels of trauma. That typically is what's happening.

There's also the flipside, that's important and I think with that warning in place I really would love people to understand that within the cultural context of other places such as, Central and South America, for example.

These medicines are used on a broad section of the population – children, women, older individuals, infirm individuals – with really positive and great effect that have been used for thousands of years safely and well. So it's not a matter of having terror about it. It's just a matter of being a responsible individual, just as with the exposure to the elements and fasting.

Igor: Right and this stuff should be nothing new to us because even, shall we say, Western allopathic medicines, well, we still need a doctor to prescribe them so they don't get over-prescribed or be used in the wrong way or fuel some kind of addiction and so on. That's part of what a doctor's role is, is to decide, no, you've had enough painkillers.

We'll be taking you off these now. Otherwise, he's creating a bigger problem than he was trying to solve in the first place. At least that's the theory on which the medical model is supposed to be operating.

Russ: Exactly, and I think that's a very useful way of contemplating it. Just build your experience levels, recognize that you've got a lot of tools in your toolbox and that this is just one of them. Like all of them, you don't just have the tool you need to learn to use it.

Igor: Let's move onto the next tool in the toolbox.

◆ What would that be?

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Russ: That would be music. Music is really, of course, a form of art but it deserves specific mention because of something known as entrainment. Entrainment is the well-documented physiological reality that if you place two cycles in nature close to each other, those cycles will tend, over time, to sync up. A great example of this that most people are familiar with would be, for instance, the menstrual cycle of women.

If you take a bunch of women and you have them live in the same space for a few months, that cycle will mysteriously tend to sync up between all of those people within a couple of months. Entrainment in music is used throughout the world to create transformations of consciousness. This is why music is such an incredibly popular art form that generates so much money in the West or is used ubiquitously around the world it creates a detailed emotional rendering of consciousness.

So it's like when you listen to that favorite song and it makes you cry. What's it doing? It's connecting you. It's transforming your emotional state. Similarly, maybe people go to a rave and they dance to trance music in order to have that rhythmic experience drop them slowly, slowly into deeper and deeper levels of the subconscious. Whereas, the modern rave is a modern incarnation of drums and rattle experiences used around the world to enter into trance state.

Igor: Right and this is an important thing to realize because every human conscious that ever existed has music in some form or another. In science, where we were talking about high-tech binaural beats or low-tech, simply the clicking noise, like the hum of an engine, for example.

All these things will affect us at some level, and the key thing for us to think about in terms of how do you use this as Shaman or as hypnotherapists and so on, is going back to what we talked about a moment ago, which is what are you doing with this music.

◆ What are you getting in touch with?

So if someone who is avoiding, shall we say, negative emotions and they need to go into, say, sadness to relieve some condition that they're avoiding, well, sad music might be a perfect way to get them in touch with that element so that they can then transform through it.

The opposite is true as well if someone needs some kind of a resource. They need to get back into their strength, an invigorated part of themselves as a way of dealing with some other life challenge. Then we can have some more invigorating music. Marching bands in the military, for example, were developed to give people courage in the face of battle.

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We don't just take music as a random event. We now are also using music as a very specific event in thinking about what is it we're getting the person in touch with so we can start using it as a therapeutic tool.

Russ: Exactly, and from what you're saying, the next step is also to bring our listeners to an understanding of the broad view of music, which would include what they are doing when they are in the process of engaging in hypnotherapy because music includes song, chant and spoken word.

Igor: Rhythm and stuff like that.

Russ: Absolutely. So these are used by the Shaman or by the hypnotherapist to change both the emotional state, but also to push people into the trance. What you're doing often times is you're implanting suggestions.

So, we have to get out of the thinking of music as necessarily a musical melodic event and get into the fact that what we're talking about is the sound vibration that we're creating, which entrains the system so the sound vibrations contain meaning. Those create suggestions in the patterns of the higher level of thinking at the same time.

So, for instance, if I suggest that somebody is going to follow a backwards countdown into a trance state, and that then we are going to penetrate down into their childhood years, and we're going to do certain things there. This is essentially the methodology of the guided Shamanic journey, or one of the many methodologies of it anyway, and similarly, we have the hypnotic journey.

So I think that music, when you're listeners understand it within that context, is probably one of their most used items.

Igor: Right and it's something I keep emphasizing to people. The way you use your voice is very important. It's the timbre, the rhythm, the pitch, the pauses. Sometimes you have more energy in your voice, sometimes less. So in the same way as a musician needs to access their own emotions in order to be able to play a particular piece, a hypnotherapist has to do the same thing.

You have to go first. If you want to have someone be more calm, well, you need to have that calmness inside yourself to you imbue your voice with those qualities. That's just another, shall we say, aspect of the whole musical element. You're the primary instrument – your emotions, your experiences – and by accessing them, it automatically alters your vocabulary, your tonality, your rhythm, your pacing.

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The whole works. It becomes a holistic process at that point, which is why some people can be so much more influential than others, purely because they're accessing that experience inside them. It's also the secret behind great musicians.

Russ: That's right, and the exact words that you use, of course, because if you are using intelligible words, then those words carry a high level of meaning.

Igor: Let's move onto another aspect. I know we've got a whole bunch more things to go through, and time is starting to run out a little bit.

◆ What else is on your list of tools that people can think about as a Shaman or as a hypnotherapist to help others?

Russ: Well, it's important to include neurotechnology. Basically, by neurotechnology, we mean any outside technological means of altering brain function, and thereby perception and pattern recognition. This does include very traditional means, such as psychoacoustics and percussion. It also contains very modern technologies used by therapists in the neo-shamanic practitioners, such as stroboscopic light, sensory deprivation tanks, binaural beats, all of these kinds of things.

I won't move into each one individually because we really don't have time for that, but let's just say that to look at this from the multicultural, multi-paradigm, meta-level that we're doing that, we have to understand that there's a wide range of technologies that have been used from ancient times to modern times that are highly effective.

This helps us to break out of our paradigms in terms of what's a Shaman? Is a Shaman someone who shakes a rattle? What about a Shaman that uses hypnotherapy? What about a Shaman that uses a sensory deprivation tank? Is a hypnotherapist a hypnotherapist because they only use that methodology or they're using other very modern methodologies? Do they continue to be a hypnotherapist when they're using a rattle and they happen to live in the Amazon?

At this point, we understand that the teachers of modification of consciousness and the reorganization of the patterns of the body and the mind for healing are essentially under one umbrella. Hypnotherapists are a form of modern Shaman, and the Shaman can be using any kind of modern technologies, and they do.

They grow, they change. Shamanism today is not what it was 3,000 years ago.

Igor: Perfect. Now I know there's a huge tool bag, and there some other things we're going to go onto, but I think there are a couple that I'd like to make sure we still

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focus on before we finish up today to give people a full sense of what's there. Some of these can be quite surprising.

People have heard of the vision quest and meditation guide journeys. I'm sure we'll talk about those a little bit more, especially in the next seminar when we talk about how we actually can do this with ourselves. One of the things I'd like to focus on today before we finish up though is something that is very important and can be very counterintuitive when we first come across it and that's the idea of using pain as a medium for personal growth, for changing these patterns and so on.

It seems like we're trying to help people avoid pain, so why would we want to use pain as a tool in our bag, which historically speaking, a lot of cultures have used and have used very successfully.

◆ Can you give us an insight into how that works and why that works?

Russ: This is actually going to hearken back to a lot of what we've already said. So we can do this one fairly quickly. Pain is, basically, a quick route to altered perception. Now we can define pain on a couple of different levels. Of course, we have our pure physical pain, and that I can guarantee you will alter your perception. It creates a cascade of neurochemical changes, and it will completely change your experience of reality.

The example I use is if you doubt this, just drive a nail through your hand and see what happens. No, no, don't do this.

Igor: Medical disclaimer here, right?

Russ: But what you'll find is all of these neurotransmitters start changing, refiring and your hormonal levels totally transform and you will enter an altered state of consciousness at high levels. This has been used around the world in terms of people driving metal objects through their flesh or suspensions in India and all of these kinds of things. The sun dance in North America is a great example.

They pierce their skin with feathers and dance and fast and combine movement and music and all of this kind of thing for this transformative visual experience and emotional experience, but at the root, what are we talking about?

Again, there's the neurochemical portion, the physiological portion that drives the consciousness change, but there's also the emotional portion within the pattern recognition systems. So pain connects you to pain essentially. We can talk about the emotional pain in the system or the trauma in the system. If we look at it that way, when we were talking about medicines earlier, what are they doing? They're connecting you to the pain.

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What is good hypnotherapy going to do if it's dealing with trauma? Perhaps it was a childhood experience, which was a truly terrible experience and it's having continuing repercussions in the modern period of that individual's life. The reason why we bring people back there is not so they can ignore the pain because the pain is functioning all of the time. It's just they're not in contact with it.

What we really need to do is create a channel to that repressed pain and allow it to express itself into the conscious mind so that it can be experienced and released properly, and the pattern can be consciously reorganized. So these levels work in tandem. It's important to understand that.

Igor: So it's important to emphasize that the purpose of pain isn't just to be sadistic or masochistic and experience pain. The purpose is if we imagine that someone's, say, psychological pain, like the proverbial childhood trauma, is wrapped in a protective bubble, and the fact that they can't pierce the bubble is why it still exists and it's still troubling them – because that bubble is bouncing around giving them all kinds of unpleasant experiences.

By going through a pain cycle, it connects them into the bubble. It's like a secret entrance inside of it and through that, you can now start deflating the bubble, letting that stuff that's inside the puss and the oozing around in there, to release so that now the healing can take place and becomes a door that opens, rather than an end of its own.

Russ: Absolutely. That's a very good description, and that really covers pain. The only other element is that, like fasting, it tends to increase personal discipline and fortitude. For many people who are having a lot of problems, arguably for all of us, the increase in personal fortitude and discipline is a helpful thing in terms of our lives. So this is why people do it. They're not being masochistic. They're trying to improve their lives.

Igor: So it's about developing resilience in life, and it's about releasing, shall we say, trapped elements that are otherwise difficult to get in touch with.

Russ: Or, neurochemically altering perception that would be the third.

Igor: The three main things. Okay. So we've got quite a long list, and I'll recap this whole list of the things we've been talking about and some of the other things that we've hinted at as well at the end of today's interview, just for everyone to have it clear insight their minds.

Before we go down that road, a big question I have for you, Russ is – we've talked about some extreme things. Exposure, we talked about pain, we talked about even things that traditionally or in the Western society aren't really

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accepted all that much in the moment, like psychoactive plants that make you see all kinds of stuff or suffer in different ways.

◆ **Why would someone put themselves through this whole thing?**

◆ **Isn't it kind of just sheer madness to do all this stuff?**

Russ: It's sheer madness done improperly. Absolutely! Done properly again, just to bring it right back to the beginning, this is done for the reasons that you've been outlining through this entire program, which is essentially opening up the patterns of perception, opening up the patterns of personality, opening up the patterns of behavior, and reinterpreting them and reforming them into more healthy and effective patterns.

Sometimes for some people when they go to the very depths of these root patterns, the experiences that they have there they feel are of the most profound kind. So this is where arguably religion comes from certainly. You know the broader spiritual practices or just the concept of profound psychological integration. These people are often having experiences that are fully immersive, three-dimensional, excruciating in their beauty.

What we've been going through – we left out sleep deprivation, which is another main one – in this list, it sounds like wow, this is such a harsh process. But, the reality is that when we're talking about healing, what happens when you do heal, what happens when you do penetrate to these deeper levels of the identity is that something profoundly beautiful happens.

If we lose sight of this, we've lost sight of the entire purpose of what we're doing therapeutically. The individual experiences in the moment something that, for lack of another description, when I think about some of the things that I've been fortunate enough to experience, I could cry with their beauty.

How often do you get to cry with the beauty of existence? This is what happens. This is what human potential is, an incredible confluence of non-linear thought and creative activity, bringing about states of profound empathy with other beings, love and care. Discipline in our action that allows us to reach out into our world and live a life that is fulfilling in a way that, I think, the bulk of humanity unfortunately isn't even aware that life can be like at this point.

It's my sincere hope that by having these kinds of conversations as a society and engaging at some level with life in this more profound way, that we as a race, as a species, as a planet can evolve in an exponential manner and into something that is truly profound and beautiful.

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Igor: There isn't much more I can say. That is actually a very poetic and powerful way of describing what I really hope for everyone, especially people who are listening to this call.

This is the real reason why I hope you're engaging in hypnosis and learning. All these things you're doing and using it as a force for good, because if nothing else, from a purely selfish level you get to live in a much better world, both in terms of your own perceptions. But also in terms of the people around you are suffering less and having a richer life, which tends to augment your quality of experience as well.

Russ: Well, that's one of the root teachings of Shamanism. It comes down to something very simple. You affect your environment; your environment affects you.

Igor: Right.

Russ: At some level, it's all enlightened self-interest. All of the goodness and kindness that we create in ourselves and in other people is the world that we live in.

Igor: Just to put this all back into perspective, in terms of this is practical and achievable, the people we admire most, whether it's Carl Jung or Milton Erickson, a lot of these people had the very same symptom or syndromes we were talking about. They were just forced on them.

For example, Erickson had developed polio. So he went through a tremendous amount of pain. Actually it's part of what polio survivors go through. He had to learn to rehabilitate his whole body to the point where he would literally drag himself across fields to get his legs stimulated back into a position where he could walk with a cane. And, Carl Jung, who stood at the edge of his garden for years at a time, talking to terrifying figures from hell, yet learning from them.

Both these people developed an immense personality. They were larger than life because of these experiences they went through, because they managed to tap their personal power and because they developed better instincts about themselves, about other people and about life in general. That's where that power came from.

We could model their language all we want. We could run through their techniques in virtually identical ways, but if we miss the instinct, which is the third part of the equation we talked about earlier on today, then we can't take other people through similarly profound experiences because there's something missing inside us. That's that sense of knowing when to do and when not to do.

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The three essential elements coming out of this are we've got to work with perceptions and the identity, the rigidity of it. We have tools that allow us to do that, and we've talked about many of those today. Also we need to have experiences that teach us how and when to apply those tools so that they work and have a profound impact on ourselves and our environment and the people in it as well.

- ◆ **Is there anything you want to add to that or does that kind of sum up the main gist of what we've been talking about today?**

Russ: That sums it up very well. The only thing that I would add is to take it out of the context of psychotherapy and teaching and even hypnotherapy. When we look at the broader world, the great leaders – what I call the geniuses of our world – they were people that lived this incredible life, which was a mixture of disciplined action in the outside world.

But that disciplined action in the outside world, whether it's Gandhi or Einstein or Martin Luther King or any of these people that came from an ability to synthesize information from the depths of their being and an ability to act on it.

This is why I like to work with – like one of our programs is known as Operation Genius, right? What we're talking about here is not just some mystical state. It's really a way of completely understand the world in new ways and providing new answers for it, and as a species, we're in a certain kind of juncture that goes a little bit just beyond the individual therapeutic level.

Our societies are made up of all of these individuals, and the way we individually live our lives is what creates our world. We have a certain set of problems ahead of us. They're right here, right now. Environmental, social, all kinds of things, and the thing is we need to step up.

These problems, as all problems are, opportunities for growth, and we need to learn to maximize the use of our gifts as humans, which includes all the richness of our subconscious world in order to be creative and thoughtful and intelligent in the way that we interact with each other and with the problems that our species face.

So, all I would add is that this genius is what we want to create in ourselves, as human beings, but also as teachers and leaders and therapists, then that's what we're training people in, who come to us to ask for help. It's nothing less than their highest potential. I think that's a very nice way to look at it.

Igor: I have to agree. I would sit here and start applauding, but I might destroy the microphone by doing so. I can only agree wholeheartedly with that. The exciting part I think about especially, in this interview here is; is that I know in the next and final part of this three part interview series, we'll actually be looking at

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some specific techniques that we can do to take ourselves on this journey that you're talking about.

This inner genius and getting in touch with these internal forces – because looking at it from a hypnotherapist or hypnosis point of view, we need to learn to go first. To go first, we need to explore what's inside our own minds, our own unconscious, and be familiar with it so that when we start working with other people, we recognize tendencies. We recognize those patterns.

We go oh yeah I had exactly the same thing. Yeah, you can waste your time going down that path, but I recommend we try this path for a little while because you might be pleasantly surprised by that.

Before we go into that, as a kind of closing piece for today...

- ◆ **Can you give a sense of what we're in for in terms of what in Shamanism is called the Shamanic journey and looking at the Shamanic journey as a way of developing these faculties that you've been talking about?**

Russ: Yes, certainly. I won't go too far into it because I think we'll save that for a detailed exploration next time but, essentially, the critical thing for your listeners to understand is many, if not all of the systems of hypnotherapy are essentially modern forms of Shamanic journeys.

What we're going to do is we're going to look at some of the traditional forms that we see around the world, as well as some of the more modern forms, and then fit them within a big paradigm, which we use in the Shamanic Yoga School.

It's sometimes categorized as Shamanic dream Yoga. It's a broad understanding of how our consciousness functions, and how we can learn to penetrate it and become aware of it, both when we're awake using many techniques of penetration, such as trance induction and all of these kinds of things, suggestion.

Also, when we're asleep by learning to walk through the different states of consciousness just as you're teaching people to do when they're in the chair in therapy, you're teaching them to enter different states of consciousness. You're going to learn to start to do that between your waking world and sleeping world.

Because the sleeping world, as we know, the world of dreams is perhaps the richest and deepest source of subconscious interaction available because of the lack of external stimulation when you're in that state, and it's potentially one of the most revolutionary practices that the human race is going to enter into. Truly a new level of living is to be able to walk through your dreams awake and

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aware, still experiencing them, and explore the infinite, or seemingly infinite anyway, realms of the subconscious mind.

Igor: With that slightly minor introduction, I'm really excited to start the next interview because we'll be taking that exact journey. We'll be looking at different ways of preparing ourselves for that and getting in touch with those internal forces that really will make us, for want of a better term more human than we already are. More of our essence than we've ever been before.

Russ: It certainly seems to be the experience of the people who practice it that's, all I can say.

Igor: Perfect. Then there's no more we can say than that. So on that happy note, let me just go through this whole list of different tools we talked about today, just to keep it clear in people's minds, and then we'll wrap it up for today.

So, the traditional list of tools that have been applied to achieve this loosening up of the identity and reorganizing paradigms and perceptions so that patterns change are?

Art, breath, costume, exposure to the elements, fasting, different types of medicines, meditations (including guide journeys, etc., which, of course, as hypnotists, we're very familiar with), movement and music, neurotechnology (which are the things like percussion instruments, like drums, rattles, and there will be things like binaural beats, biofeedback devices, sensory deprivation tanks and so on). These are all different ways of using technology to activate the way our brains work.

Pain was a very important element, partly because of the way it affects us neurochemically, partly because of the way it connects us with things, and partly with the way it teaches us lessons about being more resilient about life.

Singing and chanting, of course, is part of music I guess in some ways. Sleep deprivation is another very useful and common example of ways people have accessed and penetrated deeply into the unconscious realm.

Then there's something that you may be familiar with like, sweat lodges, which have a lot of different things from discomfort and biochemical changes, all wrapped up into one it's kind of like taking different elements and piecing them together into a new pattern.

That's really the main thing to take away from this is all these things aren't individual practices. They can be combined, like a sweat lodge combines the idea of pain and neurotechnology and sometimes music and movement as meditation, and fasting and maybe bits of exposure. It combines all these elements into a technique or a tool that has a bigger impact because it impacts

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on so many different levels at the same time. That's something we can take away as hypnotists as well. We can augment what we do, being aware of the impact that all these other things have.

- ◆ **In closing, are there any other final closing words you want to say before we finish up for today and get ready for the next and final session, where we do our own dream Yoga practices?**

Russ: No. I just want to thank you again for your time and your commitment to the betterment of your own discipline and, as we've discussed today, I think that interacts very deeply with the betterment of humanity as a whole.

Igor: Well, thank you for that, Russ. It's been a great ride. Everyone listening, we've been talking to, I guess we could call him a Master Hypnotist although he's a Master Shaman, Russ Hazard from ShamanicYoga.org. You'll find more details about him and his work there.

My name, of course, is Igor Ledochowski from StreetHypnosis.com, and I look forward to seeing all of you guys again on the third and final interview in this series, where we're going to dive into the actual practical edge of all these principles that we've been talking about. Until then take care; bye-bye for now.

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Seminar 2 – Part 1

Igor: Welcome to StreetHypnosis.com. My name is Igor Ledochowski, and I'm here with this month's Master Hypnotist, Russ Hazard, from ShamanicYoga.org. Now Russ is a Master Shaman. He has traveled the world and worked with Shaman and traditional healers from all kinds of different societies. So he is a true expert in Shamanism as a global phenomenon, shall we say.

In today's session, this third interview in the series, we're going to be focusing on some practical applications of the kind of stuff we've been talking about in theory. In other words, how you can start using these principles of Shamanism for yourself to take these personality growing journeys and have the benefits that we've been talking about.

First, Russ, welcome back for our third and final call.

Russ: Thank you very much, Igor. It's great to be back.

Igor: I'm excited today because today is where theory hits reality, and we get to put some of the stuff we've been talking about into practice.

Russ: That's true. What we're going to do is we're going to explore a few basic concepts, and the one caveat that I'd like to give is, just like hypnotism – hypnotism is made up of a series of technologies and essentially it takes a little bit of time and practice experientially to really become good at.

Similarly, what we're really going to be doing today is we're going to be talking about practices, which is a whole lot different from really getting deep into them and getting fabulous results from them. So as long as your listeners are aware that they're going to need some practice in order to make these, work for them and we we're really going to be dancing over a fairly short conversation over a vast amount of information. I think that's the proper setup for it.

What I'd love to see happen today is for your listeners to just broaden the scope of their understanding of these worldwide practices, and how they interact with the amazing thing that hypnotism is.

Igor: I think that's a great goal. Just to reemphasize what you're saying there, Russ, just like in hypnosis, you can pick up a book – and in fact I did. The first hypnosis book I picked up, I literally read the induction out loud, and it had, shall we say, quite feeble effects.

Then, as I got to know more, as I read more books and I heard some things and I started taking part in the process more, that's where I suddenly realized that everything I'd read in the first place was right it just that I hadn't built up enough experience to understand the nuances yet.

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What we're going to be doing today, of course, is focusing on the simple experiences where you can get easy wins so you can start building those nuances and realize that this is the first step on a long and very rewarding path.

Russ: That's right, and if you go back to the last conversation that we had, essentially a high level. What we're talking about here is completely disintegrating a sense of self and shattering the mind into all of its component parts. Pulling them apart, taking a great look at them, understanding how they function, putting that incredible mechanism back together in 30 different ways, understanding how each of those different ways has its effects and harnessing the full power of the subconscious mind.

So this is obviously a life-long kind of practice. I think that we've set this up in the right way. We won't be creating any Master Shaman in the next hour.

Igor: I wish it was that easy, but I guess a little practice goes a long way.

Russ: That's right. Yes.

Igor: So the first concept that will come in – and this is something that a lot of people have probably heard about. This is something that is almost synonymous with Shamanism, especially when it comes to Western workshops and stuff like that. It's the idea of journeying or taking journeys.

◆ Can you give us a little sense of what is meant by journeying before we look into it in more detail?

Russ: Sure, and you're correct. This is the most commonly understood form of Shamanism. In a way again, probably all fields have this problem there's some element that's the easiest element to practice, and it's the easiest element to explain. Therefore, it becomes almost synonymous with the entire practice, and what can happen very easily, as has happened in the world of Shamanism, is that people focus so incredibly on this one practice that they miss the big picture.

So the first thing I want to say about Shamanic journeying is you really need to put it in its context. It is one tool in a vast array of tools. Now in the last session, we were talking about methods that Shaman use to alter perception. Why are they altering the perception? They're doing this in order to learn about the function of perception and the way it creates a relationship with the world around them and the way it allows them to launch into their own subconscious.

Now we gave a great big list of these things, and one thing that we didn't even really get to talk about on that list was meditation, and the huge subcategory of meditation in which there are so many tools, one of these tools would be Shamanic journeying. The reason why we're going here first is twofold.

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1. First, it's the thing most associated with Shamanism.
2. Second, we are linking this to hypnotism, and essentially you can call hypnotism and Shamanic journeying – they're really just different cultural interpretations of the same phenomena.

This is a very useful departure point. So we want to know that the Shamanic journey is something that you can go out and learn pretty easily, but in order to really use it at its highest level, you really want to put that cog in with the whole realm of the other tools, which when they're used synergistically, you get the really intense results. So I think one of the strengths of the show that you and I have put together in this case is that we're going to pass through a lot of those different tools.

So we're going to start with the journey. The easiest way to think of the journey is as a departure from normal waking consciousness with the conscious mind as a little capsule that we were describing in the last program, a little space capsule penetrating down into the subconscious. With more and more practice, it can penetrate deeper and deeper and deeper into the subconscious.

That in a nutshell is what Shamanic journeying is, and as hypnotists, I'm sure that sounds very familiar in terms of the hypnotic path.

Igor: Absolutely. In fact, many of the classic deepening techniques involve some kind of downward motion, an escalator going down, an elevator going down, stairways going down, a pathway. These are classic deepening techniques where again, there's a metaphor of descending that says become more unconscious or go into more unconscious territory.

It's interesting because I think we've talked about this before, Russ, that the symbolism of descending somewhere is something you can find throughout literature, throughout art, throughout the history of the human race as that special time when the hero goes somewhere to recover something lost, to do some heroic act or recover some lost power. Again, it shows us how strongly rooted this idea of descending into something is synonymous for us. We're going to the subconscious mind.

Russ: Exactly. Of course, descending is not the only way to do a journey. There are different forms. So classically and in the Neo-Shamanic practice, the descending journey is known as a lower world journey. We can also ascend, and you can work in the kind of normal world just moving forward through your visual field.

So there are different ways. Just as you've got different techniques in hypnosis, potentially the same individual taken on a descending path through, say a root stream of a tree, deeper and deeper. Caves in the ground may have just

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naturally through the process of descent, through the process of all of the symbolism of that process, will potentially see different things and interact with different things than if they're climbing up a tree up, up, up, up into the sky. They might and they often do have different kinds of experiences.

So when we're talking about the capsule penetrating the subconscious, one way of doing it is to go down, but that's not necessarily the only way. The penetration is nondirectional because the subconscious is kind of all around us, if you like, because it forms our world.

So there's a difference between the specific technique, for instance, and the actual methodology in and of itself, if you get my meaning.

Igor: Absolutely. I know there are a couple of different kinds of journeys that you differentiate between.

◆ **Can you give us a big picture overview of that before we start looking at one or the other in more detail?**

Russ: Well, the big picture is the internal versus the external journey. We're going to start with the internal because, again, it is most relevant to the concepts that we've already covered in terms of the way that our dream world works. It's also closest, I think, to the most common hypnotic practices. So that's obviously important. It's also the easiest.

The reason why it's easiest is the internal journey is done with eyes closed. It's really a journey into the dream world as most people would think of it in terms of the fact that there's no external reality present. You're walking deeper and deeper into your subconscious with eyes closed and allowing the images that live there to interact with you.

The external journey is somewhat different as so much easier if your eyes are open and you're working in the waking external world. So we'll leave that for now, I think, because it's just a little more complex to understand. It's still doable and it does have parallels to some hypnotic practices, but I think the internal journey is the place to start.

Igor: Excellent. So when we're thinking about the internal journey, you mentioned this idea of a space probe or a capsule that penetrates deeply into the unconscious or subconscious mind.

◆ **What kind of things do we need to bear in mind before we go on the journey, in terms of what it is we'll be experiencing and what we're trying to achieve with this journey in the first place?**

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Russ: Okay. That's a good question. I think given the group who are going to be listening to this the thing to keep in mind is much like the hypnotic model. I mean if you're dealing with a really, really, really powerful facilitator, or for whatever reason you enter very, very, very immersive trance states, then you know that you need to take a little bit of care because what you're really doing is you're departing from the zone of control.

Now, you can with discipline, create more and more ability to control within those worlds as you penetrate, but you have to be very careful because some people who— I think the term is control freak —create such rigid structures of perception and control without learning how to become fluid, they can cut themselves off from the experience altogether.

Igor: Right.

Russ: I think we kind of covered that in previous program. We don't need to go there now. So the whole point is that at some point, you start to lose a little bit of your control because you're in an immersive world.

Igor: This is interesting. This is something emphasize because as hypnotists, we often come across this dilemma where people say, oh, I'm afraid of hypnosis because I'm afraid of losing control. What they don't realize is — and this is something that, as hypnotists, we're taught it's our job to comfort them with — is that they're kind of learning to lose control in such a way that they'll end up having more control overall.

It's a different way of controlling life, rather than the rigid thing that they're used to normally. It's the same sort of thing you're talking about here it's the kind of loosening up of control. Letting go of the regular way of controlling things in order to discuss a more potent, more powerful way for controlling yourself and your life in general that the minor control mechanism we normally use would normally block.

Russ: That's dead-on, because our normal control mechanism keeps us locked into one or a very few ways of seeing things or points of view or perceptual states, which is what we've been talking about up until now.

The whole purpose of this entire world is to expand the range of those states so that we can look at the world in new ways and access new information. So if we're not willing to step out of the bounds that we have previously created for ourselves, then we're at odds with the goal.

This leads us into the goals that you were asking about. The goal is the goal we've been talking about the entire program. It's to create a deeper experience of unity between the deep elements of the self, arguably depending on your paradigm, elements of the collective unconscious as well, even moments of full

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identity disassociation or disillusion, so we can have both new perspectives, which we've already tapped into.

I think in previous programs you mentioned at very, very, very deep levels. There is an almost ubiquitous around-the-world description of an experience, which is raw. A raw experience of living, which is singular because you've lost your own individual identity and fuse directly into a higher matrix of what the Shaman call the web of life, call it the Universe if you will.

You can think of this – it doesn't have to be a spiritual state. What we're really talking about is the physics of the Universe. We are physics. I mean that's a reality. When the ego disintegrates we're left in a raw state of sensory inflow and meaning. This state is a very profound thing by the descriptions of all of the people around the world through history who have experienced it. It's certainly an important topic of discussion for humanity in this state of social and personal evolution.

Igor: Just to make sure that people don't misunderstand what we're saying here, the hypnotic journeys we're going to describe a little bit later on today won't necessarily get you there on your first try. This is something that year's of experience, building up experiences, training and developing more and more facility, kind of like the martial arts.

You might be able to have the principle explained to you in a few minutes, but it will take years of training to get to the levels of the Bruce Lees or whoever your martial heroes on the big screen are.

The same is true here. You gradually increase this level of penetration, this level of unconscious experience, the richness of the worlds that you will end up navigating through, and that's actually a good thing because it means you don't penetrate any more deeply than your ability to navigate it safely is. So there's that balancing act that goes on, especially if you're working with this on yourself, its part of the safety mechanism, which makes it very useful.

Russ: That's right, and to go one step further, going back to something you said earlier when you were talking about the hypnotic states. Well, one of the reasons why people go to a hypnotist rather than just only practicing self-hypnotism, one of the reasons why people step out of that self-oriented world and go to a Master is because what's going to happen is they can afford to lose control.

Once they know that person really is what they claim to be – there should be steps for them to understand that – once they know that there's a tremendous level of surrender available psychologically and even just this experience of psychological surrender can be one of the most important experiences of someone's life.

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You trust your sanity to a Master. The exact same process is true, of course – I mean if your listeners take one thing – well there have been a couple of one things that we wanted them to take away, but I'd love them to see is basically that as hypnotists, they really are Shaman. They really are.

Igor: Right.

Russ: This is why we're going to the trouble of providing this level of education is because a hypnotist really is a Shaman in another form, a sub-form or neo-Shaman. So the exact same processes are in play with all of the Shamanic techniques that we're going to talk about.

You can go to a certain level of gap as an individual working out of book, but that's a lot different then going to someone who knows what they're doing saying listen, I want to get this job done. Then, having that person basically break you down and take you as quickly as is safe to the deep levels, and then bring you back and let you learn the process.

So it's not that it necessarily has to take a lifetime to have an important experience, or even years to have an important experience. I often see people within a week of really in depth intensive training – certainly two weeks, certainly a month – having unbelievable, I mean to them, unbelievable earth-shattering experiences. It's just that it's different when you're working on your own, which is a very important skill to develop.

That's where we're going to start your listeners to go into a Master and working with them in exactly the same way as if their clients were to sit at home and read a book on hypnotism or come into the clinical atmosphere and work with your listeners. They come to your listeners for a reason, and that's because your listeners are there to facilitate more rapid progress.

Igor: Yes, I mean just to use an analogy that a lot of people listening will be familiar with. If the late great Milton Erickson were still around, I would jump at the chance of spending a week with him and having him turn my brain inside out because I know I'd be a better person at the end of it. Although I probably wouldn't have a clue what happened during the week that I had spent with him.

The same is true of a Master Shaman. In fact, I know a number of people would actually refer to Erickson as a Master Shaman. He used a lot of similar techniques, from storytelling to his own personal depth of penetration, as you would call it, Russ.

This idea of going into trance yourself to help someone else through that process, the idea that you can navigate the same space as your client at the same time it's a very similar set of processes he describes, so I absolutely agree. There is a lot we can do ourselves to prepare ourselves, and finding the

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right person to take us to the next step can sometimes shortcut years of personal effort.

Russ: Definitely. I would leap at the chance to work with Erickson. This is the whole point. It's just important to understand when you're dealing with this material – again, I think in the first session we were talking about the difference between an intellectual experience and an actual experience. The point of this is to develop real experiences, which are unquestionable in their profundity.

Igor:

- ◆ **How does someone go about developing sort of more realities into their experiences?**
- ◆ **What kind of things can they expect to have happen and what kinds of conditions are necessary to allow this more concrete sense of experiences to emerge?**

Russ: Well, you're hitting the right kind of questions here. In a perfect world, this is why if I'm training someone, I take them out of their home environment because what have we been saying the personality is? What have we been saying perception is? Its patterns, so the whole point is that your patterns create a world, and your world reinforces your patterns.

So, when you're at home, you have certain rituals. You have certain realities. You get up at a certain time in your bed. You go to your coffee maker. You make your coffee. You talk to your loved ones. You go to work. You do your thing. You come back. You get phone calls. You have all of these self-reinforcing patterns, which reproduced you.

Now bringing us back to what we're really doing here is a total identity breakdown in a safe and healthy kind of way. Picking apart the meanings along the way of the component parts of the self. The first thing I do is I take people out of that home environment, stick them in an environment where they're not used to anything, which is usually a foreign country. I mean what we're saying here is this is the optimum.

Igor: Right.

Russ: Now we've already said, your listeners are going to take some of these processes and be able to work with them at home, and that is very, very relevant and useful, but if you want to ask how you really go about breaking someone down, you take them out of their environment. They're not even sleeping in their own bed. They're not around anyone who they know. They're not getting phone calls. They're not going to work. You work with them intensively, continually without break.

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Igor: Right.

Russ: Basically, doing this, you're training their patterns and essentially throwing great big monkey wrenches into all of their systems. You're not just throwing them in randomly. That's the whole point. As an experienced therapist, you don't want to be throwing wrenches in randomly. You want to be tweaking the mechanism at just the right points to create certain kinds of experiences.

Then it should be integrated. It should be, having some kind of physical level training because essentially as we've been saying, the body – you'll know this as a hypnotist – it stores the tensions that are locked in the mind. In the subconscious – I know you hypnotists are working with penetrating the body to unlock some of the tensions and the memories that are stored there.

So in a perfect program, the person would be having their physical body trained. They would be having their nutrition guided. They would be having periods of different kinds of meditation, integrated therapy, and then there's a whole range of tools, some of which will be on the list that we covered in the last program, such as potentially music, art, exposure to the elements. All of these things can be integrated for one individual to break them down.

Then we would get into the specific techniques, which I think we want to get into now, which would be where I would say, okay, now we're going to do some Shamanic journeying. So maybe we should go there now and talk about that specific technique, and that would be one of the breakdown methods.

Igor: Just to kind of emphasize the kind of stuff you're talking about, it doesn't have to be necessary that you go right to edge of the world to have the kind of experience that Russ is talking about here. Anything that takes you out of your norm will be enough.

For example, I have a lot of students who email me and talk to me – and I have myself the same experiences. When they come to a seminar, they're all empowered, and then when they go home, things feel a bit weird because they feel like they're being sucked back into an old way of being, but they don't want that anymore.

That's exactly the things that Russ is talking about. Those anchors that are there in day-to-day life trying to suck your mind back into an old habit, and if you can successfully resist it, you break free into another personality. By the same token, by going somewhere else – I mean it could be as simple as you're going on a holiday where you can be free to be someone else.

By doing some of the journeying techniques that we'll be talking about here at that time as well, they'll suddenly have a more potent effect because you have

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fewer things trying to keep you in the way that you're used to being kept mentally.

- ◆ **Can you do it on a small scale as well as a large scale or anything in between?**

Russ: Absolutely and this is why we went to the trouble of describing the methodologies last time. Some of them may have sounded mundane, but this is the whole point, sometimes just changing the way that you dress. What's that? That's costume, right?

Changing the furniture layout in your house or painting the walls. I mean going for a walk in the park if you sit in front of the computer all day. These are the small changes in the patterns of your life. Absolutely, at the end of the day, that's why integration, post-training integration is so important because if you don't make any of those changes back in your day-to-day life, then what's the point?

You should be starting with those changes anyway. Gaining mastery over changing the patterns of your life is the heart and soul of Shamanic Yoga and Shamanism in general.

Igor: Perfect, now going into the more specific again, we're going to be starting with an internal journey.

- ◆ **Before we look at the actual step-by-step process for it, what can people expect to experience as they go through an internal journey, so they get a sense of what is in store for them?**

Russ: The first thing I'm going to say, I'm going to jump right onto a pitfall. That pitfall is in the way that the Shamanic journey is generally described. The most common framework is that essentially you lie down in a relatively quiet space usually, you close your eyes and you turn inward.

Now usually, traditionally, some form of percussion – this was on our list last time – is used in order, like the description that I use is a branch that the little bird of the mind can sit on because the mind is constantly flying around, fluttering around and essentially it takes a lot of training to fix it to one point.

If you don't have the time or you have not undergone that kind of training, instead of being able to really have this disciplined mind, you just put a little branch there, which is the sound of the repetitive rhythm. It's not a song. It's a very repetitive rhythm, just shoop- shoop- shoop. This kind of rhythm just gives the mind something to kind of keep it occupied a little bit and allows it to settle down to become a little quieter.

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Igor: This is something that people will have experienced in their own lives. Maybe staring into some flames and hearing the crackling of the wood, or a lot of people who go to certain dance clubs, like raves or dance trance clubs. Again, they very specifically have music playing at a particular beat because it induces a particular kind of altered state.

So there's no difference between what we're talking about here and that sort of thing. Or even the brain entrainment sounds that we are very familiar with nowadays. They all work on the same level.

Russ: That's exactly it. Now there's a difference, of course, because some of these rhythms are specifically designed, they're frequency ranges, which have been proven to support visualization. Now this is a whole other level, and certainly the Shaman use this. I know that we're going to be sharing some rhythm later in the program.

This is designed to stimulate visions specifically, as well as provide a branch for the mind to sit on. Much like what you're saying the waves rolling in the beachside area. This kind of thing that's very soothing. Essentially, from this point the individual, in the most stereotypical representation of the journey, they're going to look for what is known, certainly in Latin American Shamanism as an *entrada* or in the broader world of neo-Shamanism as a journey tunnel.

It's typically represented as an actual tunnel. For instance, in a lower world journey, people may be burrowing down through caves in the earth, but on this is the pitfall, and this is where I'm going to start getting into it now.

Watch out for what you expect to happen because there are a lot of practitioners out there – I've worked with a lot of students – and what happens they think, okay, this kind of journey is the only kind of journey, because they've read so many books and read on the Internet and done all this stuff. So they're like, I never have a journey tunnel. I never meet power animals. It doesn't work like this for me. I'm not journeying.

If you actually look at their experiences, they are having profound experiences. It's just they're not connecting to them because they're expecting something else. What I mean, for example, is for some people, the journey tunnel will look like a dream escalator. It won't look like a tunnel at all.

Shamanism is all things because it's a dissection of the mind. So, of course, cultures where their whole day-to-day reality is in the natural world are going to have a lot of artifacts from the natural world in their subconscious.

But, if you come from a modern society and you see escalators all the time and you walk down hallways in office buildings and malls all the time, well then it's just as likely that your tunnel is going to look like a hallway or an escalator, if

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you get my meaning. So a lot of people get cut off from the experience by thinking that it has to be a certain way, and this is the first pitfall that I want to alert your listeners to.

Igor: So what we're looking for is not something specific, like it has to be the root of a tree that has a tunnel-like thing going down, but we're looking for tunnel-ness in general. It might be an airport with a long hallway. It might be a stairwell going down. It might be an ancient castle with a stairway winding down to the roots of the Earth. It might be a balloon lifting you up higher in the air.

It doesn't matter what it is as long as there's a vehicle that gets you from one metaphorical occasion to another. And, this other location being more unconscious; hence, giving the unconscious mind a chance to express itself more fully to you with less interference from the conscious mind analyzing, deleting, criticizing or saying that's not a rational way to think.

Russ: Exactly. Because of your experience in hypnosis, you've instinctively picked up on the underlying meaning, which is where I'm going next. The reality is, okay, the tunnel of some form is nearly ubiquitous around the world. Your listeners should understand that basically the tunnel form, the Shamanic tunnel or the journey tunnel as it's known, has been identified and connected with all forms from artistic spirals on petroglyphs to the circle form, the zero form, the Mandela of all nations, right?

That includes, for instance, the crucifix, yantras and Yoga. All of these different forms which, basically, beckon you to enter them. They're beckoning you to enter them. So the thing is on the fundamental level, the tunnel itself can look like anything. It's beckoning you to enter it. That's what you're looking for. What you said was really even a deeper level and that's what I like to emphasize to my students. It's that what you're really looking for is a journey. Implicit in a journey is a moving from one place to another.

Igor: Right.

Russ: Some people if you close your eyes right now and look, you're likely to see some little spots and dots of color or maybe even some patterns or objects behind your eyes.

Igor: I ended up in a scene in a little forest with a little beach... and I thought "Oh he's taking me somewhere, this is great!!"

Russ: Exactly. Well, when I close my eyes the first thing I see is the pure physiologically-based dots and spots from my rods and cones and the way they're picked up by my brain.

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So for some people, their journey tunnel is literally just moving through these spots and dots. Whereas, for other people they close their eyes and, just like you were describing, they immediately can see like a little scene. Maybe it's a memory or whatever.

Igor: This brings up another important point because they might not actually even be aware of anything visual going on. They might have just a sense of a kinesthetic, a feeling sense of movement. They might just have an overall sense that something is moving, even if they can't clearly define how or why they would know this.

Russ: What is movement? Movement is change and change is happening all the time. In Yoga we call it *Anicha*, it's happening all of the time. So this is the deepest level, I think, for people to understand and get out of the pitfall of the journey's not working. You're changing every moment. There's auditory material happening. There are kinesthetic materials happening. This is the true journey of your life.

We're not just playing make believe here. What we're doing is we're interacting with different elements of the journey of our life. It's just that they're elements that maybe we're paying more attention usually to other elements. This is why we call it the subconscious is because we can't pay attention to it at will.

So, at the most fundamental level, your journey may be just like lying there in the quiet and feeling what it is to be you, moment to moment changing. For some people that's the journey that they need most.

We'll take it back to the most common stereotypical journey, but what I want people to understand – and what I spend a lot of time using different examples when we're going experiential work, so people can get images of these different kinds of journeys – they can take so many different forms.

The biggest pitfall that will stop your progress is being disappointed having that sense of this isn't working for me, because it is working for you. It's just that you're too fixated on yourself, on your wants and on your expectations to be able to appreciate what you're being give. That's a great metaphor for life.

Igor: It's an example of the very rigidity we're trying to break, which is saying, that an experience I'm having right now isn't good enough and that's exactly what's blocking them from having the experience that they're hoping for, because the doorway to the kind of sort of Samadhi or amazing experience.

This transformation experience that they're looking for is actually the experience that they're having right now, but by discarding it they don't even have a starting point for their journey anymore, which means how can they get

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anywhere if they keep discarding the starting point that their unconscious mind is presenting them?

Russ: That's where it links to what I was saying about this is a metaphor for our lives. Why are people coming to hypnotherapy? We talked about why are they exploring Shamanism? It's because they want to have a better life, and the fundamental teaching, I think in both of those is your patterns are making you ignore the reality of life, which is that you're in a miraculous position being alive.

That's the reality. You have this incredible machine, which is your mind, which is integrated with this incredible machine, which is your body, and in this incredible world that is your school yard and your play thing combined.

You can delve into the depths of gratitude and contentment and bliss within that. What's stopping you from that is all of these patterns of the self. So the exact same process happens in journeying as happens in the external world, and this is exactly why journeying and hypnosis and these kinds of techniques are so powerful because the exact teaching that you get within the journey or the hypnotic therapy are relevant directly to your interaction with the outside world.

Seminar 2 – Part 2

Igor: Just to summarize then, we're looking for some kind of a vehicle that's tunnel-like in nature, but not necessarily an actual tunnel itself, although that's most likely to happen, that's going to take them from one location in their experience to another location in their experience.

- ◆ **What can they expect again, in more general terms to have happen once they get to this place?**
- ◆ **What's the purpose of getting there?**
- ◆ **What kind of experiences are they likely to meet there?**

Russ: Yeah, now that we've said that anything and all that's happening is a journey. Let's go back to what we're focusing on developing this skill for. So, what you're doing is the skill, which we call in our school listening. Listening isn't necessarily with the ears.

The development of the listening skill is the development of your inner intuition or your inner compass, if you like. So what you're doing is you're moving towards the feeling of depth. This is your journey, and I'm going to give a description now of what a potential journey, based on my experiences we'll call it.

So I'm lying on the ground. I've got my percussion going in the background. I'm relaxing my breath. There's a whole range of skills that we use interlocking. One of the main ones is feeling the breath entering and exiting the body on the upper lip. So I use this highly trained methodology as a form of relaxation training and use my own breath to begin entering my own trance state, just as you would as a hypnotist.

Again, I don't say it every time. It's the same process. So I drop myself into slowly deeper and deeper and deeper levels of trance by first relaxing the physiological and psychological systems of the body. Then by seeking the direction of depth, of the feeling of depth within me, and that will typically – because I've trained it – I will say I often go on underworld journeys.

So, essentially, I'll begin moving through those little stars in the visual field and they will begin to fuse into a picture, and that picture for me often comes in the form of vines and rooms. I'll pass through these vines and rooms. The thing is at some point my little space capsule, which is my conscious mind, loses its connection with my body altogether.

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My body can change forms. Sometimes it will feel like my body, both other times it may dissipate altogether or maybe like a mist. I can stretch it out. Of course, now I'm in my subconscious. I'm in my dream world, so I can live in any kind of body I want. This is the thing about this entire procedure is as we do dream Yoga we can live in any body we want to, anything we want.

So as I penetrate down through these root systems, perhaps I'll hit a dead-end. What this would be is an area of resistance in the patterns of my body where I have not kind of matured my technique enough to pass through it. It would be like an actual form. If I could see it in actual form, it's probably a chunk of neuroses as reality.

This will take a visual form and block me. So now my job is to figure out how to continue to penetrate. So perhaps I need to change my form. Sometimes I've had, for instance, in a cave, material that's much like spider webs or something like this. It's very cloudy and I just feel like I can't pass through it. Sometimes it has been just the intuition of my system to change form into like a fluid form or a gas form, and I can kind of penetrate through the threads.

Other times, I can't get through and I have to trace my way back and go down another corridor.

Igor: Right.

Russ: But the key is perseverance— breathing, relaxing, penetrating.

Igor: And even this in itself, even if you haven't gotten to the "destination" yet, this in itself is already of great value because what you're doing is you're already interacting with your unconscious, and you're listening to your intuition. So you're beginning to take lessons from the inside. The lessons being you'll pass this one as a mist, or actually go back and try another tunnel. That's your best bet right now.

So we're actually beginning to listen to those guiding instincts, which will be good for us in our day-to-day lives anyway.

Russ: Absolutely. We're developing tenacity. I think we're developing will, we're developing – yeah, we're developing a whole series of skillsets.

Igor: An interesting thing, you just said tenacity, but this is where you get taught the different between being persistent, being pig-headed and bang your head against the wall, because there are times that being persistent means drop that project and come at it from a different angle.

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Russ: Exactly. That's very true. That's why you've got to be keeping practicing your relaxation and taking your contentment from the moment. Feeling gratitude, like okay, now hold on, as I'm busy banging my head against this wall, why don't I just take a moment and wonder if I'm in a place that might be of some use right now.

Then you look around and you realize, oh my God, I am standing in a cave with walls, and I can see all of the rock patterns on these walls, and when I look closely, there are pictures on these walls of primitive handprints blown on the walls, and oh, what's this? There's an antelope painting on this wall. This is how your journey then progresses, so exactly what you were saying.

I mean the point is to be tenacious, but it's not to be pig-headed. It's to continually come back to the wonder of the experience of living, and you want to do that in the outside world as well.

Igor: I'd just like to make a point to people listening here, those of you who are familiar with the dynamic mental imagery induction. What you're learning right now with Russ is the key principles behind that. In fact, this is one of the places the idea came from. So if you're learning to do this with yourself, your ability to navigate through other people as a hypnotist through their own symbolic realities will be so much easier.

So this is the technique of choice if you want to get really good at understanding how the unconscious works with other people and not being stumped when the unconscious minds throws a little blockade at you and goes, ha, ha, ha try to pass this one!

This is exactly what we're talking about now, isn't it, Russ?

Russ: As you were saying. As per the Hypnotist's Oath, for the Shaman they're the same thing. The only way you can become a real Shaman, the only way in my opinion you can become a real hypnotist, is to practice the techniques yourself to mastery. Because otherwise, there's no way that you can possibly effectively move other people through those techniques.

So what you're saying is oh, so true healer heal thyself. Practice your own techniques. So, yes this is a very common kind of dynamic, and it's extremely important to understand because once you have it, you are going to make fabulous progress. Nothing can block you permanently. You'll just take a side route around it you'll change your form.

What are you doing when you're doing that? You're changing the pattern. Learning to change your patterns to more effective, healthier patterns is what we've been talking about over and over. So this is the guiding principle in all of the work.

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Perhaps I'll just continue with the journey as I was describing it. Does that work for you?

Igor: Please absolutely. That's a great idea.

Russ: I bumped into this web and I can't penetrate it, and I'm bumping my head against it. I'm trying to change my form. I'm debating going back. I'm feeling a little bit irritated and self-oriented. I'm thinking, I'm a better Shaman than this. Then I stop myself. I shake my head and I think, Russ, what are you doing? Come on. Look at your environment and see what it has to teach you, and figure out the situation.

So I look at the walls. I notice all these amazing rock formations and prints, and finally I notice an antelope on it. I find the antelope itself becomes a tunnel, and I enter that and what happens is this can take me to another stage, which is what I call a vista or dreamscape.

What will happen usually, whether you're doing an underworld journey and penetrating into the earth, or whether you're going up into the sky, or whether you're penetrating your visual field, you have a sense of a journey traversing space and time. Those may be very warped or very different than normal reality.

Igor: Just like in a dream. It can be very warped.

Russ: Exactly because it is the same thing. Then you will emerge at some point into an open area, and often people describe it as, I'm moving through a cave and the cave opens up, and all the sudden I'm in – okay, using the example of the antelope, I'm in the grasslands of the Serengeti. So it's like these little tunnels link worlds within us bubbles, if you will. Reality bubbles within us.

I pop out into this Serengeti plain. This is an important differentiation in your journey, it doesn't happen for everyone, it's not critical because, as we have said there are so many kinds of journey and we're just not going to have time to explore them all.

This is a very common experience and it's an important marker because when you pop out into these worlds, you're no longer so focused on A to B, but your training will always default you to penetrate in more deeply whenever there's nothing else going on.

In this vista world, what will tend to happen is the journey will start coming to you. This is why it's an important difference. So at this point, perhaps, I start watching herds of animals going by, and it doesn't have to be, again, it doesn't have to be some kind of naturalistic world. I want to get people out of thinking about Shamanism as necessarily being naturalistic.

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Something happens at deep levels, a fusion with the natural environment, which we may or may not get to that changes people's lives forever, in a very positive way.

The reality is depending on the world you spend all your time in, you're probably going to have images that come from that world. So maybe instead of the Serengeti, I end up in Downtown Toronto. Anything is possible and equally valuable. So in this particular journey, I'm now in a vista, and it's the Serengeti Plains, and I can feel the Sun on me. I can feel the wind blowing over my back. I can hear the animals in the distance.

Now what I'm trying to outline here are different levels of penetration. As you penetrate more deeply, typically different sensory elements will begin coming into play, and the more sensory elements come into play, the more what we call immersive the environment is.

This same things happens with hypnotic therapy, does it not?

Igor: Oh, absolutely.

Russ: So, it's one of the ways you gauge the depth of immersion for the individual is how fully sensory three-dimensional the experience is.

Igor: Right, and one of the other things is, which is a corollary, and I'm sure it's the same in what you're talking about, is the more we interact or engage with these symbolic realities, these things that happen that are the like creatures and the Plain and so on, the more real they become.

So by glancing over them cursorily, well, the reality is a little bit shaky, but by interacting with them and giving them some reality, and by treating them as real, talking to them or touching them or studying them, they become more real; hence, we penetrate more and the trance deeps automatically.

Russ: Yeah. As you said in an earlier episode, it's like training a muscle.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: So as we develop these faculties inside of ourselves, they become self-reinforcing. This is why the meta-level that we keep talking about through this program is so important because once you understand it, you're using the reality that we are all patterns to your advantage, and designing patterns or, let's call it software, which is self-reinforcing for development and learning and growth.

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This is, basically, what you're talking about. Once you develop this system, it will begin to self-reinforce and become more and more powerful for you. What you're really doing is becoming the Master Programmer of your own matrix-like reality.

Igor: Which is pretty cool, actually.

Russ: Very cool.

Igor: So now a question then is people are going to have kinds of different experiences here. We've already talked about the tunnel that can come in many different shapes, sizes and experiential things. This kind of dream landscape, this vista as you call it, where again, the experience shifts to – it's almost like they enter a reality bubble of some sort, like they've entered a dream sequence and different things keep happening there.

They're going to at some point bump into some form of anti-personality. It might be a memory from the past. It could be an animal that talks to them or a phone that rings and gives them instructions; they're going to be interacting with these things.

- ◆ **Can you tell us a bit more about what to expect at that level?**
- ◆ **What are the pitfalls?**
- ◆ **What the purpose of even having those experiences can be of benefit to them so that when people get to this stage where things begin to open up, rather than just being purely observational and going okay, this is interesting, they can be more purposeful with their observations too?**

Russ: Definitely. We can do that very briefly and generally within this context. Essentially, we will go back to one of the master teachings, I think, of this particular series is that no matter what situation you find yourself in, one of the rule master keys for successful living, being a successful Shaman – which, in fact, we all are. Just as I think you're aware that everyone's really a hypnotist at some level. It's just that some people are trained and some people are not.

It's to look at that moment and find what it means to you. What does it have to teach you? If we're always doing this it's one of the key components of a successful journey and a successful life. So when you're asking how can you deepen this experience, well, the first thing is, just like in my example where I'm banging my head on the wall and then I step back and say hold on, what do I already have right in front of me? What is going on here that I can learn from?

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I think when you take that perspective, then it profoundly deepens your experience. So for instance, on my Serengeti, perhaps I'm staring directly at the face of an antelope. Now I can just be going, huh, it's like watching the Discovery Channel, or I can be saying to myself, what reverence can I bring to this experience because, basically, I'm at the very least staring directly at my own mind and some artifact of my own mind. I should be asking what it has to teach me, and this is literally your most basic journey.

There are a lot of different kinds of journeys that we can do, and we'll talk about maybe a couple of them. We don't have a lot of time to do that, but we can talk about a couple. The simplest is to find a teacher and what you do within the journey context is what we call artifact, which is any fragment of your being, of the collective unconscious or anything that could be external to you that you meet, you treat with respect, whether it's frightening in appearance or whether it's nice in appearance.

This is getting back to that question of craving and aversion. They are different kinds of fragments. So we have happy parts inside of ourselves and not-so-happy parts. We have wise parts and tormented parts. What we're trying to do here is we're trying to get to know those parts, to stop ignoring them, to stop turning all of our attention to every distraction we can find in the external world to avoid knowing ourselves, to avoid interacting with these components and to avoid listening to what they have to say.

A lot of time, all you think about is other relationships. Like in the real world, for instance, I have someone who I love, and I never pay any attention to them.

Igor: That's a recipe for disaster, isn't it?

Russ: Oh yeah, and I lived with them. I mean it's different if they're somewhere far away, but if you're living in the same house and even worse if when they try to talk to me, I turn on the TV and pointedly ignore them.

Igor: You can feel the tension rising.

Russ: Well, we can laugh, right? What we're going to end up with is dishes being thrown. That's what we're going to end up with because they're going to want to get our attention. This is the internal discomfort that people feel so, what's the purpose? The purpose is okay, I'm going to turn off the TV and I'm going to listen to you. Not only am I going to listen to you in an adversarial context, as in, I wish you would do this.

I'm not going to do this because I don't want to, and blah, blah, blah and getting into some kind of argument, would it not be intelligent, if you're living in the same house – and in this case, you can't get out of the same house because the house is you, right?

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Igor: All the people who have tried to not be themselves...

Russ: Exactly. Wouldn't it be a smarter thing to do? To sit down with that individual and say, okay, listen, I know we have not been talking, but I'm going to change that. I want to hear what you have to say, and not only am I going to listen, but I'm going to really listen with an open mind.

Now I'm going to keep my sense of ethics intact, so if you tell me I want you to go and kill the President, then I'm probably not going to, but I'm going to listen to you with an open mind and try – this is the critical point – to take your perspective. Just for a moment, I'm going to suspend my own little world – I can come back to it afterwards; I reserve that right, but I'm going to try to see the world through your eyes – and really feel it.

Igor: So you're, basically, respecting the message by really getting a sense of their perspective. Now whether or not you agree with it afterwards, that's another story. That's actually a very important point to make because it's a mistake that a lot of, shall we say, novice or misguided Shaman do, that they'll do whatever their guides or these fragments of their personality tell them to, which sometimes isn't very healthy.

We know where people normally put people who hear voices and do what they say, right?

Russ: I would say it's very unfortunate that we put those people there. It's a dumb thing to do, and our entire mental health system has got serious problems, but yes, essentially I think the point that we're really trying to make here is again, to use the same metaphor.

If you've been in an unhealthy relationship with someone for a really long time, just because you turn and say okay, I'm going to listen to you now, it doesn't mean that they're all the sudden going to be 100% healthy and they may tell you to go to hell.

Igor: In which case, you start going off, all right then, let's go have a journey.

Russ: Exactly. It's equally ridiculous.

Igor: Right.

Russ: So if you've got a fragmented portion of your personality that you've not been paying attention to and it's been banging the proverbial dishes, then you actually go and talk to it. Well, if it's an unhealthy part of yourself, then of course the things that it's going to have to say are going to reflect that. The purpose is not necessarily to do what it says, but only to understand where it's coming from and then enter into a healthy dialogue with it.

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Again, just like you would do with someone who you loved that you wanted to save the relationship with. You want to really communicate, get to the root of the issue and then find new ways of being. This is the point. When we're talking about patterns, these things are patterns inside of us, and we're not going to change that pattern if we just ignore it and hope that it changes itself.

We're not even going to change it if we just put our hands over our ears and say positive things, like everything's going to be okay. I'm a happy person blah, blah, blah. These things don't work, and they don't work because they're not getting to the root of the problem, and that's a true interaction in self-knowledge.

I think that's part of why we want to do these things which answers part of your question.

Igor: Excellent. Let's just recap where we are right now. The whole journey begins with the right stay. We're focusing our mind and relaxing our body. We might use some techniques like breathing and so on as a vehicle to help hone that whole experience.

We'll use something like rhythmic music, or we'll actually be – Russ has very kindly allowed us to use one of the sounds that he's recorded of the Shamanic rattle to help guide you through your own journey at the end of this particular interview. So we'll be using that as a kind of a life preserver that's going to draw our focus through the experience.

Then we'll let whatever our experience is open to some sort of a tunnel scene, whether that's an actual tunnel we see like in the earth, or if it's a metaphorical version, like little sparkles of light or something. We'll have sense of moving somewhere.

If along the way, we come across some kind of obstacle, we'll have to figure out a way around it, and while listening to our own intuitions, our guidance systems, internal guidance systems to know how to deal with that particular obstacle. At some point – it might be in the first journey, it might be in the 10th journey; it doesn't matter what – you might open up into some kind of a bigger vista, more like a dreamlike landscape, where it's populated by archetypal figures, things that represent part of your own personality.

It could be in the form of an antelope or a typewriter or a robot. It doesn't really matter what. As we focus on these things and interact with them and enter into some kind of a dialog, we'll begin to heal the relationship with ourselves. We don't necessarily have to do what they tell us to, but we do have to listen to what they tell us.

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In so doing, we're actually listening to ourselves and we are becoming more of ourselves than we've been before. This idea of listening is really entering their version of reality, which is part of what makes us less rigid.

Russ: That's exactly right. Now listening to this, aside from the skills of self-determination and intuition and of this that we've been building, what are we doing here? We're building the skills of communication. We're building the skills of healthy interaction, intimacy even, but it's intimacy with ourselves.

These skills are also transferable to all of our other relationships, and so I just want to bring attention to that point because this is very useful, both on a person level and on an interpersonal level.

Igor: Something you just said there just reminded me of a joke. I don't know if you've seen the film called the 'Love Guru'?

Russ: I loved that film.

Igor: He comes up with a little phrase that I really like and it fits what we're talking about here with this word intimacy. He breaks it up into saying "*in to me I see.*" It started as a cheesy joke on the film, but it actually fits really well in terms of what we're talking about here.

Russ: That's the great thing about Myers, he takes great material and makes it so unbelievably cheesy, I can barely watch it. It's great, and I love the guy.

So "in to me I see" is absolutely the reality of the situation. From here, I think the question you're asking on the most general journey is, when you come against or up to an artifact – and an artifact can even just be the vista itself because as an example, I have kind of floating above the earth, if you will, watching the great migrations on the plains and the tides coming.

The clouds form and dissipate, the people, the forests and watching the world just function. This was the artifact I was supposed to be learning from I'm just watching the way the world functions from an observer's point of view and learning from that.

The thing that you pose, the question that you pose is really I am here to listen. Do you want to teach me? Because the reality is, is that some of these artifacts are not going to. Like I said, we've been ignoring them for so long, they're just happily running around in their own world, which is your subconscious, doing whatever they do down there, mixing and mingling with all of the other crazy beings that live there.

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The tormented child and the wise elder and all of these beings are sitting down having a Mad Hatters tea parties and this kind of thing. So they may not have the time of day for you.

Igor: Or conversely you might not be ready for the message yet because you may need some more evolving yourself.

Russ: Exactly. So the thing is the way I'm coming to each and every being, again, could this possibly be transferable to the outside world? I'm ready to listen. Are you ready to really share with me? So, basically, some of them will just go on their merry way, and then this is where you resume your default position of if I feel intuitively that I'm done in this space.

Then I continue my penetration because the next thing you know, you may be going on another journey to another vista. These things can go on and on and on for hours and hours.

Igor: It's like one of those paintings where you see someone looking through a window that looks onto a landscape where there's a house with someone looking through a window onto a landscape where there's a house.

Russ: Exactly.

Igor: You're doing this whole metaphoric journey over and over again, as much as time permits.

Russ: That's right. So at some point, if you're lucky, one of these beings will teach you. Now they may not teach you verbally, sometimes because, of course, they're inside of you. I mean they can communicate with you telepathically. Sometimes they'll grab you and just take you somewhere and have you rip something.

Oftentimes, does this sound familiar? It may be a repressed memory. Can you teach me anything? The next thing you know, the antelope's eyes become my entire visual field. I fall through the eyes, which is really another form of journey tunnel, and I pop up when I was five years old and my mother left my father, and it was the last moment that I ever saw him, and I was very, very sad in it and I didn't remember it up until that point.

There's this trauma there and I re-experience that within a healthy context, and perhaps this is part of this particular healing. Now this is only one of an infinite number of worlds, as you're picture with the person looking out the window onto the vista endlessly and infinitely illustrates. It just goes on and on.

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There are as many worlds as you can imagine, and each one is a memory. We can have memories, interestingly enough, of hopes or dreams. So our mind can exist in the present moment, albeit only with a lot of training. Most of the time, it's experiencing a little bit of the present with a lot of the past, or a lot of the future.

So we're either dreaming forward or dreaming backward. We're either remembering or hoping. So we actually have memories stored in us of things that we have hoped. These can be feelings. These can be experiences and so on. So what these beings show you, what they teach you could be stop eating red meat, an antelope telling me that. I wouldn't be surprised.

It could be so linear or it could be popping me into a repressed memory, or it could be touching me on the forehead and, boom, my entire identity dissolves and they act as this kind of mystical teacher, if you will. These experiences are all experiences that I have personally specifically had and watched many people have, and they're among a very wide range of experiences.

Igor: Okay, so you've given us a pretty good understanding of the journey in so far. Are there any special notes that we should take in terms of when it's time to come back and how to come back from this experience?

Russ: Well, what I instruct all beginning students to do is one of the things you do before you leave is you set the intention. You say, you make an oath, basically, that no matter how interesting the world I find is, I am going to come back to this reality. Okay? Because the reality is, is that in these internal spaces, there are people out there in our mental hospitals who are stuck in these spaces. Some of them might not even want to come back.

Igor: Because the place they're in is so much nicer.

Russ: Yeah, absolutely. They're living a full life there and interacting. You can live lives within lives in worlds within worlds.

Igor: Right. Just to emphasize something to folks listening in terms of safety, we're talking about deep levels of penetration at this point. If you're just starting out, chances are you're not going to be getting those kinds of levels anyway. So the worst thing that will tend to happen to a novice is you might just fall asleep.

That's to get a sense of the way we are when we start and where you could end up with experience and practice, but you're not necessarily going to be going straightaway to that point. This is a good time to practice.

These are practices to say I will come back, because it's going to be easier anyway. That way in your later practices, you experience it more and more in life. When the chips start coming down a bit more fully, well you've built that

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muscle inside in terms of you've said you'll come back and you will come back it's another habit you've created, which is a very positive safety-based habit.

Russ: Yes. What are you doing? You're deciding the patterns. You're writing software. As you become more experienced, you make each piece of software more powerful and more detailed. So at the beginning level, the reality is, is no one's going to get lost out there. Well, unless you're already like what we would call severely mentally ill.

Igor: In which case, if you have any form of psychosis and you're listening to these recordings, just don't do it. Find a practitioner to help you with it.

Russ: Yes. You're on a healing journey basically, and the thing is someone like that, their reality is like we were saying in earlier programs, these are exactly the kind of people who would have become the Master Shaman in other cultures because their perception is already open. All they need is some help training the discipline.

Igor:

◆ How do you navigate in those spaces?

Russ: Yeah. Some of these people make the most amazing therapists. So I just want to say that to anyone who happens to have schizophrenic episodes, listening. You've got the background to become one of the most amazing therapists there could be because you've been there.

Igor: If nothing else, just look at Carl Jung again. He had a huge life transformation after he had a psychotic break. It lasted several years. At the end of it, he was so transformed that people just flocked just to sit near him. He had an amazing curative effective just through his personality because of this. So, it's not just some platitude we're talking about here we have historical examples to actually demonstrate it.

Russ: Yes. What we're talking about is the entire underlying basis of why psychotherapy, but more specifically hypnotherapy, works. I mean that's what we're talking about.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: The reason why it works is because it is dealing with deep internal patterns, which are like the whole personality matrix, and it resolves issues. It brings unification of fragmented selves. It reduces the number of conflicting goals and it brings the being into greater unity. That's the whole purpose of hypnotism.

Igor: I agree.

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Russ: That's the purpose of Shamanism, and it's really what we're talking about. So there's no need to be afraid. Quite the opposite, this is the process of healing. It's just to say we're going to come back because there's lots of work to do.

Igor: Right. So we've made that promise to ourselves, and we'll keep it at the end of the process.

◆ **What else do we need to bear in mind in terms of finishing this particular journey?**

Russ: The reality is that for most people who are practicing only on their own and they never take any real training, the levels are going to remain fairly superficial. They will get visual experiences and they will interact with artifacts and archetypes and learn from them and all of this kind of thing, but they will never lose control.

So really, the thing to keep in mind is that it's going to be an ongoing process because this is a life-long process that's unfolding. So if you're looking for a miracle cure, this is not going to transform you overnight.

If you want to engage in super intensive training, then okay. The same thing if you have a client come to your clinic once every three months who doesn't really put any effort into it, or maybe even worse, they're just staying home, and this is much better than nothing, but they're reading a couple of books. Right? They're doing an occasional self-hypnosis practice. What kind of results can they really expect as compared to somebody who becomes very dedicated?

The more dedicated you become, the deeper the experience. What's important to keep in mind is that we are always going to keep on growing and evolving and having challenges and this kind of thing. Really, you need to decide how important that process is to you. If you're out there as a hypnotist, as a healer, then it should be pretty important.

Igor: I agree. So let's get back to the meat of the technique. We've got the idea of the relaxation. We've got the rhythm to hone our attention as I like the metaphor of a branch to keep the mind focused. We've got this opening scene, the entrada to the kind of tunnel that's going to take us to some other place.

We know how to navigate through it because if there are blocks or obstacles, we'll let our intuitions guide us. Sometimes the tunnel will be the lesson. Sometimes it will open up to a vista and we'll look for a lesson in there.

There are different types of journeys we'll go on and we'll have a little chat about those in a moment. Then at the end of the experience and, of course, the experience in terms of using it in traditional ways, the rhythm changes into your callback rhythm, right?

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Russ: There are two different main forms within this subgroup of journeys.

1. One has a callback, and
2. One is open.

For instance, the rhythm that I'm going to supply for your listeners to use is an open, which means there is no callback. So this is very useful if you have an unlimited amount of time for your practice and you're going to take the time and go as far as you go and come back on your own time.

In an open practice, you call yourself back. In a closed practice, basically when the time is up, say it's a 30-minute journey, the rhythm changes to a rapid rhythm, and it's basically sparking your conscious mind, reminding it if you happen to be very deep in the process that there is an external world, and telling it it's time to come back.

So in either case, what you do then if you happen to be interacting with the teacher at that moment; this is the thing about the open journey is then you do this when you're finished, but if we're being called back and if you're finished, both. Then it's very important to give thanks because what are you trying to create again? You're trying to create healthy relationships.

Just imagine like it's with your life partner. What would you do? You have to build a respectful, thankful relationship. So you give thanks for what has been given. Then as much as possible, you trace your steps. The reason for this retracing the steps – it can happen very quickly. Say it took me 20 minutes to penetrate, and then I have the experience for 10 minutes.

Coming back may only take me 30 seconds because just like in the dream worlds, time and space are malleable. I can zoom through the entire course of events that I went through to get here very quickly, but as much as possible, it is important to come back.

Again, this same procedure is often used in hypnotherapy, because what you're trying to do is trying to bring back as much of that deep place and experience that happened there as possible to the outer world. You're also trying to assist the individual, which is in this case yourself, I guess, to translate and become used to the more superficial layers.

Then, eventually, come back into external reality in a healthy manner, rather than just like if someone's sleeping and you jump on them and scream to wake them up.

Igor: A lot of fun if you're not the one sleeping.

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Russ: Yeah, but not so much if you are.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: So there's a dual purpose.

1. One is to bring back as much of that world and what you've learned as possible.
2. The other is to transfer yourself back to the external world with a minimum of jarring.

Igor: Very good.

Seminar 2 – Part 3

Igor: That gives us a nice full, clear picture of the entire process. We'll be giving you those steps again at the end of the call before you actually get to listen to the recording, just so you have that fresh inside your mind. We may even actually put it on the beginning of the recording, so that you have a nice introduction to it.

- ◆ **At the end of it, when they've come back into their regular conscious world, their eyes open up and they're back in the real world, what do you recommend for people to do at that point?**
- ◆ **Is it just enough that they've done it, is there some kind of record-keeping or something they do with what they've had in terms of the experiences to make the most of it?**

Russ: This is where all of our procedures – you know they really start to come together. So yes, it is enough that they have it that's the start point isn't it. The more we express these elements into external reality, the more concrete we make them, we give them validity.

Now we want to do this in healthy ways, so if I come in contact with an enraged, tormented, murderous child, perhaps what I want to do is write about it or talk about it because often times this happens within the context of facilitated training. This is where the hypnotherapist is talking to the client or where the Shaman is talking to the student. So this is a point where therapy is happening in the external world, but it's very useful.

Igor: This is, of course, what many people misunderstand when they read a book Shamanism. The bit where the student comes back and says oh, the great god of the underworld said this and the Shaman interprets what it means. That's actually the whole reframing going on. It's the healing process going on or sometimes just keeping the student on a sane and level track so they don't start doing silly things just because the inner voices told them to.

- ◆ **That's a very important part of that relationship as well, isn't it?**

Russ: Yes and giving alternative perspectives because maybe the person comes out thinking a certain thing, and they're like oh, I'm such a terrible person and this kind of thing. The idea is that the Shaman or hypnotherapist then, as you said, reframes because they've got a big picture, because they've been through all of these places.

This is why it's so critical to do yourself. They've been there, and they've watched lots of other people go there. So then they can give this person, oh,

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but have you thought about this? I prefer that to interpretation because when you interpret you're, basically, saying this is the way it is.

Igor: Got you. So you're giving people alternatives to expand their world view, rather than limiting them by the dogma of the one world view.

Russ: Right. I think what we always want to be looking at is empowerment, wouldn't you agree?

Igor: Right.

Russ: Yes. So that's something, but then we can go into all of the other different methodologies we've been talking about. This is where people make artistic representations. It could be musical or a sketch.

You don't have to be a great artist. It could be a stickman with horns on it and this is the antelope person that you were talking with, but whatever it is, the fact that you have made it concrete is building a – well, you know what it's called within the Shamanic world, and you need to understand and interpret the words because it sounds kind of flaky. It's called honoring the spirits.

The spirits are just a catchall phrase for all of these internal elements and aspects of the self. We can talk about other concepts in other cultures but we're not going to, so we're sticking with this psychotherapeutic paradigm and process right now. These spirits are, basically, the internal elements of the self that we meet in our dreams and in our journeys and all of these things.

When you say goodbye, what were we saying? We say thank you. When you said hello, what were we saying? You're saying I'm going to listen to you and we're going to develop a healthy relationship. By concretizing that what you're saying is this relationship has meaning and matters. Although that may sound a little flaky on the surface the reality is, is that those internal elements do respond to that.

This is one of those self replicating and deepening loops we were talking about; this is one of the procedures that you use to create more immersive worlds, because as you do that, the artifacts inside of you respond and they come at you harder and harder with more and more information.

Igor: It's kind of like someone who's had years of not being listened to suddenly like they're listening? I've got all these things to tell you now.

Russ: Absolutely and better yet, not only did you listen – you know what you just reminded me of? You were talking about a movie earlier – there's a scene in the movie Titanic where the young scoundrel meets the ignored fiancé and they

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hit it off because what's he doing? He's really listening to her; her fiancé is not. She's communicating all this information to him and they fall in love.

Why do they fall in love? It's because people like people who really listen to them. Then he draws this picture of her and it carries all of this meaning because, basically, when he draws this picture of her, what's he's imbuing the picture with is, is I really see you, I'm really listening to you and I'm focused on you and seeing all of the details of you. Not only that, but I'm moved by the beauty of that to create some kind of representation.

Of course, this is very powerful throughout the film, and that's not important, but what is important is that this same process happens with the internal elements, and when you not only listen to them, but say yeah, I didn't just listen but I'm making this part of my life, then they have a lot of things to say.

Igor: It strikes me that this is very true because it brings to life the fundamental, shall we say psychological principle and spiritual principle that you need to love yourself, all and every part of yourself. This is a process to learn to do that. That listening process is a way of letting those splendid parts of the personality that have been ignored come back to the fold and be welcomed with loving arms saying, it's okay, come on back. Rather than suffering, the person gets to use that as an empowering moment.

Russ: Exactly and finally, I think it bears saying that what are we looking for? We're looking for a life that is lived from the very center of ourselves. That's what we're looking for. So this expression is the beginning of a long process that we really practice a lot in our school, and it takes a little bit of training.

What you do is you slowly but surely start to pull this material out of the depths of your subconscious and begin to practice it as your life.

So all the sudden, what you have is people learning. Maybe they were a science student and they learned it. Really, they are moved to become an artist. I've seen people just actually go do that and that becomes their life and giving. Or other people are moved to engage in social assistance programs and helping other people for their life. Maybe the artist discovers they're a scientist.

Whatever it is that you're doing, though, the interesting thing is that what you're doing is you're building a bridge from the depths of who you are to the outside world. It goes first to the conscious mind, but then the conscious mind is the vehicle of action. So then you take it and it becomes your actions. It's at this level that, okay, not only do I have integration between the depths of my subconscious and my conscious mind, but I even have deep integration between the depths of my subconscious, which I've been making more and more healthy, and the actions that make up my life. That's very profound.

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Igor: Pretty much you can't get more of a big deal than that, right?

Russ: All I can say is when you live that way it is kind of a tautology that it's going to be a pretty amazing life.

Igor: Right. Now just to look back at the practical sides of things a little bit again, we've talked about the principle of the journey but, of course, journeys can take many shapes in terms of their purposes, what you do with it. The one we've discussed is the basic teaching journey.

You find someone to teach you something, and you take that understanding, that insight, that knowledge, that changes back with you. But there are other kinds of journeys you can do as well, which are more specific for specific kinds of things.

- ◆ **Do you want to talk to us a little bit about some other types of journeys people can take, so they can have some variety and get a sense of there is a whole range of things that they can experience inside?**

Russ: Sure. What I'm going to do is just very, very briefly go through a couple, and I really want to emphasize that high levels of training – there are many, many, many techniques, and all of them – it's kind of like a lock and key. They're designed to open up different parts of you and this type of thing. We won't have time to get into all of that.

Basically, the first one that we describe is your basic exploratory, find a teacher. I think that no matter how advanced you get, you always want to come back to that one because basically, what you're doing is you're asking an open-ended question. With all of the others, you're starting to narrow the question just a little and I think always in life, we want to come back to our open-ended questions.

Because, if we're trying to break through into new paradigms and perspectives, we have to say what am I missing that I haven't even conceived of. I think that's always a relevant question.

Igor: It's important because very often the questions we ask ourselves have built into them the very limitations that we're trying to transcend. So sometimes asking a question that we wouldn't ask ourselves is exactly the thing we need to do because that gives the scope to go beyond the limitation that's inherent in the question we would otherwise have asked.

Russ: And it's one of the great strengths of Shamanic Yoga in general. This entire process and what we've been trying to talk about here is seeing things in new ways. So by definition, you have to be experiencing new ways and concepts and asking new kinds of questions that you never even thought to ask.

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Basically, your subconscious, the depths of that, is the place that you're going to find that because it's at very root levels of perception and organization before you've become so concretized in your conscious mind, so it's at the heart and the soul of why we do the entire practice. From there we can get into more specific questions.

For instance, we can go into a general healing. Now that would be like the next most general of the questions because basically, once you understand this process – and I know you do, Igor, it's very similar to what you're doing out there in the hypnotherapy field – any kind of self-understanding is going to translate into some kind of healing if it's done properly.

This entire process is a general healing process, but when you ask specifically for your subconscious to assist you in understanding what you need to understand to heal, then often times you're directing the answer by directing the question. So you're focusing perhaps less on the mundane realities of life, although, again, the antelope could say eat less red meat and I guess that might be generally healing to somebody who's overweight or had problems or something.

By directing it in this way, you're saying, listen, what I need, I know that I'm carrying trauma inside of me. What I need is I need to resolve that trauma, and I'm coming to you with dedication and determination. I'm not just coming looking for a magic pill. The reality is I'm going to have to live this.

So I'm coming to you with dedication and determination. The same thing that we're developing by developing our journey skills in the first place and practicing regularly, and what I need from you is I need you to assist me, at deep levels. I think everyone can imagine what could happen at superficial levels. The artifact in front of you is an old man and it represents your fear of death, it's about the nature of mortality, that cheers you up and that's really nice.

However, at deep levels, this can be fully immersive and completely profound. In fact, we were talking about the Shamanic death, I think in the last episode, and basically that old man, if you have trained really hard and gone to very deep levels, may well kill you, so you actually experience dying and perhaps things happen after that death.

Usually what happens is you enter Samadhi, so your ego dissolves. He's pressing the reset on you. Essentially, you realize in that space, wow – well, actually you don't realize it in that space. You realize when you come back from it, wow that was incredible. That is not actually something to fear. What's to fear is not living properly in the interim.

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So this is the depth of healing that you can get with training. It's the same kind of thing within hypnotherapy, right?

Igor: Absolutely.

Russ: I mean you would need a lot of training to penetrate to that kind of life-altering, completing personality-transforming.

Igor: Well, you need either a lot of training or a lot of leverage. For example – and I know you've done this kind of work as well – with people who have a terminal illness, you'll have much more leverage and they're going to go there much more quickly because it someone seems a bit more urgent now.

The training is a huge important bio factor of it and urgency is going to be another part of it. That's one of the reasons why having motivation and the discipline to keep going, your unconscious mind will test you and go, are you really serious about this? All right, then, here we go.

Russ: Yes, absolutely. Basically, what happens is the same amount of training time will give you variable results, depending on how dedicated you are.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: What you're saying is in certain situations, you're coming like this is it, I'm doing it now, and when you come with that attitude, you bet that's going to have a huge influence, so that's very true.

Igor: Right and to add something in terms of general healing, we know from the research of very primitive versions of what this is, we've all come across the idea of using visualizations with people who have, for example, cancer. The classic one from the 70's was a Pac-Man eating up cancer cells and so on.

We know from Meta studies that people who use visualizations alongside regular chemotherapy, for example, live on average 50% longer. So it actually has a physiological effect on your health as well. That's a very primitive method because what we're talking about here is rather than telling them what the symbol is – here's a pac man, he's going to eat your cancer cells, which to someone who's never played pac man means nothing.

On the other hand, what we're doing on the opposite side is we're going to get the unconscious mind to present a symbol to us, a symbol of healing, which means everything to it. So by interacting with this healing symbol and getting the result that way, it becomes much more potent because you're working with the stuff that you're actually made of, which includes the stuff that actually heals you.

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Physical healings are included in this whole process, though of course, they can never be guaranteed because there are a lot of complex things that go into the whole equation, but you definitely can boost your immune system, boost recovery rates and so on when you're doing these things. So when we say healing, we do literally mean the whole range of healings.

Russ: Yes. You've just opened a can of worms that I'm dying to jump into because this is the field of my study basically, but I won't because I know we don't have time for it.

Igor: We'll save that for another interview.

Russ: Yes. What your listeners need to realize is that this modality forms the oldest traditional healing system in the world, and it is ubiquitous – or was ubiquitous at least – in the world. Everywhere had some kind of Shamanic culture, and this is how people healed. People don't keep doing things for thousands of years if they don't work.

So there are places, for instance, here where I am in Peru where the bulk of the population – we're talking about the majority, partially because they don't have funds for allopathic medicine, but mostly because it is their traditional form. When they get sick, they go to a Shaman, which as we've said, is a hypnotist.

Now what I want to pose to you is can you imagine a Western world where the bulk of the population if they got physically sick – we're talking physically here, not just emotionally, not just that they want to stop smoking or something but physically ill– cancer, heart disease or the flu. If instead of going to a physician they went to a hypnotherapist, this is what is happening and has been the reality for most of human history.

So, when we're talking about the potential for real healing, I think that it is grossly underestimated by most people in modern Western culture.

Igor: Just to emphasize what we're not doing here is denigrating allopathic medicine and saying, let's throw it out the window and uninvent the wheel. We're talking about having a holistic system that uses the best of both worlds.

Russ: No, of course not. I come actually from an allopathic world therapeutically, and I work very much with allopathic practitioners. The way I usually say it is, look, if you're having a heart attack, there's nothing in the world you want more than a cardiologist, right? Come on, let's be reasonable.

All I'm saying is that a great portion of the world has relied on this because they didn't have allopathy, and it gets results and we're pointing to a very, very small

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slice of the research, and we don't have time to get into the research. I mean there is fabulous research out there that clearly shows even just things like relaxation training has extremely powerful outcomes. So we can leave it at that.

Igor: That's a topic for another time, and I'm sure that if time allows, sometime maybe next year we'll do another interview specifically on healing because I agree with you that there's a lot of ground that can be covered there.

Russ: Yes. So general healing would be one. The teachers – another one that I want to point to is often called gathering your guidance and power animals. This is a very, very Western neo-Shamanic way of saying it, but it's useful for a paradigm perspective. What I want to throw out there is you're developing your family of teachers. Again, because at a root level, we are part of this ecosystem, we are part of this world a lot of them will appear as non-human.

Some of them will appear as human; some of them will appear as non-human. That's just the way it works. Your psyche is full of all kinds of different things. Some power animals, and they're what we would call – it could be a monster. It could be anything is the point, but the thing is once you develop a healthy relationship with it, on your exploratory, the most basic kind of journey and you're asking an open-ended question and looking for anything.

This journey is a little bit different because what you're saying is, what I want to build is a long-term relationship. What I want to build is something that we interact regularly. Whenever you feel you have something to learn – or that I have something to learn rather, you come to me and let me know.

These are called power animals and guides. They're fragments of the self that you build an intimate relationship with and will come to you and they inform your life and act with wisdom.

Igor: This is not, as unusual, as it may sound because I've spoken to a lot of people who are very successful, and virtually all of them have at some point or other mentioned that they had some kind of a mentor, and when they got into a trouble spot, they ask themselves the question, what would my mentor do?

Which is the, shall we say, indirect way of doing exactly what we're talking about here. It's asking them hey, Bill what would you do? Great idea, I'll do the same thing.

It's not like Bill suddenly is necessarily doing that. Maybe he is at some level, but at another level, at least we know for a fact that it will be part of their own psyche that understands Bill-ness. It says oh, Bill-ness says go down this road and we'll have these kinds of effects. That's what guides and power animals do as well. It's just finding them within yourself in a greater field, so you don't have to rely on just a particular mentor or person that's particularly important to you.

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That might actually be one of the guides, but rather than setting ahead of time who it has to be, you're allowing the unconscious mind to select from a much wider pool of potential guides; hence, possibly make a more powerful impact on your life.

Russ: That's an excellent description. Yes, exactly. This is metaphysical question, which we've been talking about since the start; are some of these things external? We're not going to get into that in these episodes. That is a great question and there's a lot of work to be done there. I've seen some pretty interesting answers, but the reality is when the person turns inside and looks to the mentor, that mentor is there.

It's just a fragment of their own personality, which has understood someone else, and it's built a pattern, a little micro pattern inside of themselves and they're asking that pattern to become stronger. So these power animal's, that's where their power comes from.

Igor: It actually reminds me of something else that is important to bring out. The reverse is also true. People who hate – I mean let's face it. We don't necessarily like everything in life, but if there's a particular thing that really gets our goat or a particular person that really annoys or we really actually despise, we don't actually hate that person. We hate that aspect of that person, that pattern inside ourselves. So that's a lot of self-abuse going on at that point, right?

Russ: Definitely. This is why these beings when they seem negative, they have exactly as much, if not more, to offer than when they're positive because they're lurking around in there anyway. Basically, you get a lot of sorting and straightening out the bendy kind of parts.

Igor:

- ◆ **Is there anything we can do with these more negative aspects of ourselves to maybe recover some of the power or heal some of those wounds?**

Russ: Well, you're talking about another kind of journey, which is a shadow journey. Absolutely, but the key thing is – I like to keep this very simple, especially within this context when we're covering so much material, a superficial level at a quick rate.

When you're doing shadow work, the thing to remember is you do exactly what you do in your basic journey and that is try to say listen, I'm going to keep my personal ethics in play here, but that said I'm here to listen and I'm here to take your point of view.

If you don't do that, then that shadow is never going to come into the light because what you're saying is, I still don't accept you, and the whole point of

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the shadow is that it is an unaccepted and disowned part of the psyche. So until you actually allow yourself to look at the world through its eyes you're not going to get to understand it to a level at which you can.

What you're going to try to do is you're going to partially try to heal the shadow elements of yourself. You're acting as a therapist or a Shaman within your own view of worlds, but also you're going to allow them to show you what they have to offer.

For instance, there are a lot of things we consider negative or may disown that aren't necessarily so. Like for instance, we were talking about mortality and death. A lot of people really disown that reality, but the fact is, is that when they allow themselves to experience a psychological death, they find that their life is so profoundly enriched by that experience.

It's not fair to say that just because something is a shadow – the reason why it's a shadow is you're not listening to it, not giving it its space and sometimes what it will teach you is compassion.

Many people when they do really deep shadow work, they find some frightening things because I think at our root, we're all capable of a lot of harsh actions. We have a lot of very dark tendencies as human beings at the root level of our survival instinct.

Igor: Exactly, and just to balance it out, we've got as many dark roots as we have heights that we can soar to. So we have the whole range and that's the whole point, right?

Russ: That's how we become such full people, is by understanding all of these things. The thing is that these things that really most of us would never want to look at often when you actually look at them they're not as frightening as they appear. They're, basically, just very primitive and childlike. Like the, I want kind of thing.

What you end up feeling is compassion. Just like with an injured person or a traumatized person, that compassion goes a long way towards healing them. Then when you look out at the world, maybe you see people doing things that you don't agree with, it becomes a lot easier to treat those people with care and compassion, which is probably going to create better outcomes, than just saying you're a terrible person and I hate you. Do you know what I mean?

Igor: That hasn't solved that many problems, has it?

Russ: That's right, and this is the thing for people to understand about shadow work is it has as much potential for beauty and positivity as anything else.

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Igor: Well, it reminds me of an old practice that I came across, and ever since I've adopted it myself it's been wonderful. It's an old tradition, and I don't know if it's an urban legend, but I believe it could be true. A Native tradition where if a child has a nightmare, rather than saying oh there-there it's a nightmare, don't worry about it, it's not real. The parents will say okay, well go back and capture the nightmare.

So instead of letting the monster chase you, you go hunt it down. Find it and then hold onto it. Then the monster has to give you a gift. Traditionally, what will happen is the kid will turn around and he'll wrap his hands around the monster.

I've done this in therapy as well, and it works great. They'll hold onto this monster and then suddenly the monster transforms and changes, and the next thing you know, they'll sit there like just laughing or having a great feeling or the monster will teach them something or give them a sword something that really empowers a child. It wasn't until they stopped and actually paid attention, rather than running away, that all that power was released.

This is exactly what we're doing here in the shadow work. We're doing the same exact journey as a teacher, it's just the teacher happens to be a monster, or someone doing a monstrous thing, or someplace that looks frightening and so on, and we're recovering the power that's lost in there by facing it and not trying to dissociate from it.

Russ: That's right. Those very words recovering lost power, of course, that's a whole journey, in and of itself. Now like I was saying about healing, all the journeys heal. That's what they do. That's what they're for. In the same way, healing really is always going to bring with it a certain amount of regained power. So these are just different ways of framing the experience and the question.

They're all interlinked, but what happens, of course, is that as we disassociate from ourselves – which is our subconscious and all of its inhabitants – we lose that which we are. We lose our wholeness. We lose our fullness. We lose our memories. We lose our future visions. We lose our goals. We lose our dreams, our hopes. We lose our ability to communicate on a meaningful intimate level with other people, with other vistas.

For instance, many people have profound communication say sitting by a river and watching the river go by. We lose our connection to everything. This is the root of why we keep going around in circles trying to really talk about the why's. This is the root of the why's. So recovering lost power is inherent in all journeys, but when you do it specifically, to regain that oftentimes the artifacts will take you to major areas where you've lost your power and previous moments.

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For instance, perhaps that antelope took me to the moment where my parents split and literally I saw my father for the last time, and perhaps I lost at that moment a certain trust for the world. So perhaps that might be by recapitulating that experience and really feeling it and understanding it and reintegrating it into my psyche and honoring it and releasing the tension surrounding that.

Then what I've done in doing so is formed a pathway from the depths of my being – what I was like at five years old. We're talking about a very young psyche, right? Right up until my conscious mind as an adult now – and release all of that tension and energy that's been held up there and with it like paradigms.

Maybe all of the sudden some of that distrust of the world relaxes, because that's a pattern I've been reproducing, because I said in that moment well, this world is not a trustful place. So it reproduces and reproduces. Now what I'm doing is I'm altering the pattern by saying, you know, I just experienced that and I learned a lot from it and you know what? This is a pretty amazing world that I live in and overall I've got this wonderful psyche and I've been given this help to heal. You know what, actually I feel pretty darn good right now, and I'm willing to take some steps to trust the world.

This is the true level of regaining your lost power. Now again, you can go to very deep levels and like we've talked about the Samadhi experience and pressing the reboot button in that space, basically, what's happening to you is you're fused into, literally fused into the physics of the Universe is what it feels like.

Like you are atoms flying around and there is no more power to have. I mean it's feeling it's an experience of limitlessness, which is why cultures around the world have described it as a spiritual, a religious or fusion with God experience.

You can argue whether that's an external experience or not, but the experience itself, from a subjective point of view, is by definition an experience of connection with everything. So you don't get much more recovered lost power. That's pretty powerful.

Igor: If nothing else, that gives us a good reason for going in there and getting some good juju out, right?

Russ: Yes, I think so. So those are a few of the different kinds of journey types. I know we have limited time, so I think we'll probably just move on.

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Igor: We've got some powerful journeys and the key thing for everyone to remember here is those journeys are more a question of intent. You can enter them in pretty much the same way, but intending it, the tunnel changes, the tunnel takes you to a different place, and the population that's there will interact with you in a different way, all because your intention and where you set the parameters in the first place.

Hence the idea of asking a more specific question, but it will look pretty much the same as the basic teaching journey we talked about. It's just your purpose becomes more and more narrow with each of those questions you ask.

Russ: That's right. Exactly!

Igor: That's a pretty thorough actually exposition of the internal journey and the different ways that can be handled, but we mentioned at the beginning that we also have an idea of an external journey, which has just as many techniques and methods of navigating through it as the internal journey.

- ◆ **Can you tell us a little bit about what you mean by the external journey, so that we have more of a sense of how that can fit into our day-to-day life as well?**

Russ: I would love to do that. What I'm going to do with your permission – because this stuff is just a little tricky to teach really well, and what we want to do is teach it really well – I have to dance around a couple of topics. So with your permission, I'm just going to take one moment and link what we're doing to a later concept, which is dream Yoga.

Igor: Okay.

Russ: What I want people to do before we move into the external journey is understand – you said something very important when you were talking about the internal journey. You said, sometimes people will just fall asleep. What I want people to be thinking of when we get to the dream Yoga is that this is all a big continuum of consciousness.

Just to finish the section on the internal journey before we move onto the external – at high level, when you've learned all of the interlocking skills in Shamanic Yoga, what happens is you are now a lucid dreamer as well.

So you learn to move slowly from your waking state into your sleeping state without ever losing consciousness. Now we're going to get deeper into this later, but to people who don't know, this lucid dreaming phenomenon is very

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well scientifically documented. It's been studied at major universities around the world, and it's just a normal function of the human brain. So we can learn to do this.

At higher levels of the internal journey, basically, what happens is it stops making a difference whether you are awake or asleep because you wrapped the layers of consciousness and stitched them together. I have to say it a couple times at different moments so people will understand.

We've stitched together the cycle of consciousness so that when I penetrate my subconscious, I'm entering the dream worlds in my waking state. I'm keeping a little space capsule of my conscious mind, my awareness there, and I'm penetrating, penetrating, penetrating.

At some point, I basically enter a space of full immersion, at which point it is impossible to tell whether you are asleep and lucid dreaming – because our body is completely relaxed and you're having full visionary experiences – or awake and journeying.

This is very important to understand as we move through the external journey and then into dream yoga because, basically, what we're trying to do is we're not just creating communication between the subconscious and the conscious. We're actually stitching together all of the different states of consciousness that the human being goes through throughout its cyclic day, so that we're creating a full stream of consciousness and integration.

This is the point at which your Shamanic journey – they become full worlds. They become explorations. So it's important to understand that before we move on because as we get into the external stuff, we're going to get like a little more real world because this is the way to understand the external journey.

Igor: Just to emphasize, what we're talking about right now is actually the heart of – a lot of people may have heard about this idea that we create our own reality. This is the heart of the whole point of Shamanism. It is exactly that. So you can watch your reality being created, and you can create a better one on the fly if the one that's happening to you, evolving around you doesn't serve your needs or purpose at the time.

The idea of being able to do this whether you're dreaming or you're awake or you're somewhere in between, it should be irrelevant because your awareness is the key feature that does the work. So they're approaching the same place from different directions.

Russ: Exactly. What we're talking about is essentially fundamental to what it means to be a human being.

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Igor:

- ◆ **With that rather small preframe, how does this fit into the external journey?**

Russ: The external journey is another way of handling the whole situation. Basically, what we're doing with the internal journey is we're sending the little space capsule of our conscious mind deeper and deeper and deeper into the subconscious until perhaps it fuses with the core, which is essentially where you lose your sense of identity altogether in that Samadhi.

Now, the opposite way, and it's necessary to do and master both if you're really going to take this practice everywhere it can go – is your living in your conscious mind in the external worlds, so your eyes are open. Now what we're going to do next is we're going to allow the subconscious to manifest itself into our external world while awake with eyes open.

This is a very different thing, and to explain it properly we just have to step back, and we don't want to go through all the perception stuff again, but I want your listeners to think back to everything we spoke about, about the way that we intake the information from the external world through sensory apparatus. That sensory apparatus encodes it and then it's sent through a whole series of switching stations basically where the information is transcribed and modified and judged according to its relevance to our survival and well-being and this kind of thing based on patterns.

Then that moves into our higher organizational centers and is decoded. At a fundamental level, it is decoded according to the patterns of our perception. Again, pattern recognition decides what is important information and what is to be discarded. By far the majority of the information is discarded.

From this, we then apply our scheme and schemata, our stereotypes about how the world works, which are patterns again, about how we think the world works. This determines the way that we perceive the world. So, remembering this process and how it creates a three-dimensional hologram that I'm experiencing right now is the critical factor in understanding external journeys.

Because we're remembering, of course, that as I'm standing here speaking into this microphone to Igor, who's far away from me, and all of this is going on around me, I'm looking at the ceiling and the walls and all this, I'm not actually seeing the external world. Again, I am seeing action in my frontal lobe. I am seeing my own brain is what I'm seeing.

Igor: This is an important point. What we're saying here – and this really just follows from what we've been talking about throughout this whole interview series – is that every waking moment is an example of an unconscious moment. It's an unconscious projection inside our brain of an approximation of what the world

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outside might be like. By studying what we see and take as normal everyday reality, we're actually starting in our own minds. We're actually seeing our own minds.

The only thing that's missing from what day-to-day people might do and what a Shaman does is the element of awareness. You're now aware that when you're watching the TV, you're not watching the TV. You're watching yourself being reflected in the TV. When you're walking through a door, you're not actually walking through a door. You're aware of the fact that you're walking through a door inside your mind as much as one in the physical world.

It's almost like everything in the whole world that you could touch, taste, see and sense in any way whatsoever, becomes a kind of a massive giant-sized Warshak Test. You know, those ink blot tests that you show people, and you figure out how their minds work because those shapes are essentially meaningless, so you have to project meaning onto those shapes.

We're doing that in the whole world around us all the time anyway, and if we do it with awareness, that's when we get to learn about ourselves.

Russ: Absolutely. The other thing that a Shaman does – other than having awareness of the reality of that – is they consciously learn to modify it. Modification is, basically, an opening and closing or a decision-making process as to the perception streams. This is why when most people think of a Shaman, they think of them going into this trance and seeing things that other people can't see and all of this type of thing.

What they're doing is they're shifting the band of perception or the pattern of recognition from one band to another band. That's all they're doing. There's nothing necessarily more mystical to it than that. They're moving the way that they perceive. This is the entire point of the external journey and why it's so important.

I think what you were just saying about this kind of hologram-like experience. This is how I try to get people to understand what dream yoga is and why it's relevant because basically what you're saying, in other words, is we are dreaming all the time.

Igor: Yes.

Russ: We're dreaming all the time, whether we are awake or whether we are asleep. The only difference is that when we are asleep, there is no external world meeting our dream. When we are awake, there is an external world – or, this is a metaphysical question– and what we're doing as our dream is interacting with that external world and modifying our experience of it.

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Again, we'll go back to the very, very, very low level example of the dog. You meet the dog on the street, and the person that's loved dogs all their life is lit up. They're filled with joy and love, and they feel like giving that dog a big hug and it looks like a wonderful dog.

Another person who was bit by a dog when they were four, they see that dog and they think that dog is a dirty, horrible animal that is aggressive and might bite them, and they feel fear and all of this.

The dog is the damn dog so they perceive completely different experiences though. This is what we're talking about. We're not saying that there isn't an external world. Our discussion is about how this external world comes into being, and we're not going to get into them, but for now we're just going to keep it real simple.

There's an external world, but our experience, what we experience in that world is completely a product of our perceptual processes. This is the external journey. It's a modification of this.

Igor:

- ◆ **Can you give us some examples of simple techniques we could do to start playing with our perceptions?**

That way we can take this external journey through our unconscious mind and learn to start shifting our perceptions even if it's a little bit in our waking state so we can bring that, shall we say, power, that ability to manifest and change the world around us into our day-to-day activities, as well.

Russ: Sure, that's what I'm here for. Just to give a little bit of an outline, I just want to make sure that people understand that what we're talking about here, a good example is looking at something, or just experiencing your moment of reality in this moment, perhaps fixating on one object or another, and watching how your own perception modifies it. I just want to be sure that your listeners understand that this is what we're talking about.

In an external journey, what you're doing is you're experiencing reality. It doesn't have to be in the visual field, you could focus on the auditory, but the fact is, as a species we're visually oriented and this is the first one that people learn how to use.

Just to clarify, I might be looking at a mountain, watching while relaxing and allowing the processes that are inside of me that filter the actual mountain that's out there in external reality through the light that's bouncing off it into my eyes. Then it's encoded and decoded in my brain and has all of these angles that make it stand out through the rest of the world and shadows and what those shadows might contain.

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This can become a template for my own projection onto the world because what we have to understand is we're constantly – what we're trying to say here is we're not just projecting onto the world, we're making the world in our brain. The world that we're seeing is our brain.

Another way to think about it is we're projecting ourselves always onto the world. So if we look at the world with a critical eye, we can see ourselves. This is another form of penetrating our self-conscious.

Igor: There's an old saying, which is *people don't see the world as it is. They see the world as they are.*

Russ: Exactly and that can be horrific.

Igor: The kinds of practices that you're talking about are the things that actually pretty much everyone has probably done at some point or another. For example, most of us as children have lied on a hill, looked up at the clouds and seen castles or dragons or planes. Sometimes real planes, but sometimes just cloud planes those are again, they're like the Warshak Test.

The clouds themselves have no intrinsic meaning. It's that the patterns have reminded us of something and isn't it ironic that when someone says, look, there's a face there and you go, where? I don't see it. Then they point it out and they describe it and describe it some more and eventually you'll go, of course, how could I have missed it. It's exactly that. Now your mind has switched onto it, and you've started doing that projection process we talked about.

Russ: You've kind of moved well beyond where we are because what you're talking about now is Shamanic facilitation. This is exactly what a master Shaman or could we say a Master Hypnotist does. What they do is they help people to form entirely new patterns, entirely new projections. Now we're really moving beyond the really base level of helping assist people to rectify traumatic patterns, which is why most people come to them. Liked, I want to be healed.

There's an old saying, which I think is very relevant within the holistic healthcare field, which is that health is not the absence of sickness. There's a whole other level where we can explode creatively, explode literally from the heart out into the world and witness anything imaginable all around us. All the time we're seeing connections between things and concepts and people and places and hopes and dreams and ideas in every form.

This is an incredible level of living. This is part of what differentiates a Master from a practitioner, is moving beyond the level of assisting with trauma and into the level of what we can safely call, blowing the mind wide open. Blowing the heart wide open, blowing the perception wide open and moving from the model

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of health is the absence of sickness to health is a positive state, a very positive state and a state that is so positive that it is breathtaking.

Igor: Of course, the kind of processes we're talking about here, especially this idea of assisted shifting in perception, is what in classical hypnotherapy will be known as – everyone here will be more familiar with the idea of a reframe. That can happen on a very scale like hey, look at this situation like that and you'll feel better.

But, it can also be on a global scale and we'll actually be using one of those examples in one of the exercises later on today, of look at the whole Universe in this way, and look how much more magnificent and meaningful your life becomes like this versus like that.

Now you choose. Do you want to live in the world in which everything is just dull grey and boring, or do you want to live in this other world you've just seen where everything is exciting and fun and amazing and powerful and you're part of that?

Russ: Yes, and I have to add – just to be fair and balanced – and sometimes frightening and overwhelming and whatever. Experiencing the raw reality of existence is something that when I watch it happen for the first time in people, it's like they can't believe it.

They can't believe it, and they're a little bit scared, but it's like the most wonderful experience of their lives. Let's put it that way. So I just want to make sure that we're not creating images of some kind of Pollyanna world of lollipops and pigtales. This is not child's play. What we're talking about is what are the realities of life and death, ecology, sustainability, interaction, community, health, creativity and life glowing there's a lot of complexity in that.

Igor: Right, so it's kind of like no matter how warm the sunshine is, we still need toilets.

Russ: Yes. For sure. That's one way of putting it.

Igor:

- ◆ **On that happy note, shall we move onto some ideas in terms of some techniques people can actually try for themselves to experience this shifting of perceptions on purpose?**

Russ: Yes. The first thing I'm going to say is in our last episode, what we were covering is traditional methodologies of altering states of consciousness, altering perception. So please refer back to the last episode because, really, this entire – I'll give one or two little exercises – but that entire spread, that's

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what it's for. These are altering states of consciousness predominantly in the waking open-eye reality.

So some of the meditations are closed-eye, and some of the consciousness technologies are closed-eye and this kind of thing, but most of them – as an example, we were talking about the vision quest. Okay, it's a vision quest. What you're doing is you're going out there trying to modify the patterns of perception that feed into your brain and create your experience of reality so that you see things in different ways. Those different ways are visions. The reason for doing the vision quest is the external journey.

So I just want your listeners to understand that all that stuff we covered from fasting to sleep deprivation to art to rhythmic drumming to breathing techniques to whatever, all of these things can be used in different ways as tools in your toolbox to shift your reality in very profound ways.

Igor: To elucidate that in a simple, understandable way, for example, the vision quest – a lot of people are familiar with it, especially if you're into the whole Native American spirituality. That's often facilitated by things like they'll be out in the elements for a few days at a time, so that's exposure into the elements.

Then they probably don't bring anything to eat. They may have a tiny little bit of water with them, so there's a fasting element there. Typically, they'll be staying up, so they're having an old vigil, which means there's sleep deprivation going on there.

So there are several things going on inside a vision quest other than just sitting on a rock waiting for something to happen, which is going to make it more likely for that something you're expecting to happen to go ahead and happen.

Russ: That's right. As you become more trained – because what I want people to understand is basically, you learn to relax your pattern. If you look at your pattern as a whole, there are all kinds of different subpatterns in it. If you look at it as a whole, that's your identity, that's your personality.

So when you learn to gradually relax that with integrated training, you'll learn to have this experience, basically, on command because it's essentially just a relaxation of the ego. Until that time you need to use levers to break your pattern open because you haven't learned to relax it.

All of these different tools are the different levers and this would be why, for instance, some of the people around the world use the traditional medicines we were talking. Most people have at least heard of medicines, and they know that when people take them they see funny things.

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These things they see, these waves in their visual field, what they're witnesses is their pattern recognition systems shifting. They're actually watching the process of their perception moving, and then at higher levels these visions can become full on dream projections from the subconscious.

So whether it's by medicine, by fasting or by being well trained, just being able to go whoosh, open up your ego, disintegrate your patterns and see the world in different ways, the same underlying process is happening. It's just a question of whether you need kind of a little lever to help you do that or not, and that's a question of training.

Igor: Exactly.

- ◆ **With that happy thought... can you give us some simple exercises that we can do that are little levers we can do, open-eyed, in regular consciousness, so to speak, to develop a sense of yes, I have my eyes wide open, I know I'm awake, I'm not sleeping and dreaming, and yet I'm having a little shift in my experience?**

Russ: Okay, the first the one that I like to give people because I think that it works on psychological level, as well as a methodological level and I always, like that's self-eye-gazing. What I'm saying here is okay, you're going to go and you're going to stand or sit if you need to be more comfortable in front of a mirror, and look yourself in the eyes or find – as you progress, you can try different experiments.

That's what being a Shaman is. It's being that scientist's consciousness. So you can experiment. Try the bridge of the nose, try the chin, try the forehead or whatever, but start with the eyes. You're going to look at yourself in your eyes and just relax and breathe. The breath technique that I'll give here is just feeling the breath entering and exiting the body through the nose, feeling the sensation of that happening.

You're not to modify your breath. You're just letting it be natural. This is a very early form of what's known as, anapanasati, one of the most powerful meditations there is. Just start in it to calm yourself down because external journeys, as much as internal ones, depend on your learning how to relax properly.

So when you're looking into your eyes, you basically relax the visual field, relax your eyes and just play with that, and with a little bit of practice in relaxation, most people will start to see their face change. Their face may become old, young, male, female, ugly, beautiful, monstrous, other faces or completely other faces. The face may disappear altogether and all you see is eyes. You may see a corona or an aura around the face.

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The room may change. You may have certain emotions come up in you as you're witnesses this face change. Now these are fairly intense, and it may take you a little bit of practice to do that, but most people actually will get those kind of results if they practice regularly for a couple of weeks. The reason why I like this – you can do this with other people, right?

Igor: In fact, anyone who's been onto one of my seminars will be familiar with the hypnotic gaze induction, and one of the exercises for that is exactly this, only you're doing it with other people. You're looking at them, and you're having pretty much the same kind of experiences that you talked about. Strong emotions pop up.

Sometimes people have giggling fits because they can't handle the emotions that come up. They'll see all kinds of weird distortions. Sometimes they'll flash forward or backwards in people's histories. It's pretty intense stuff.

Russ: It's very intense stuff. When I said it was symbolic, the reason why I have people start – I mean eye gazing with others is another incredible exercise and I really like that you do that in your seminars. The reason why I start with this one is because the first lesson is that you're looking at yourself.

Igor: Of course.

Russ: What we're saying is you're always looking at yourself. When you're looking at someone else, you're actually looking at yourself. When you're looking at the mountains, you're looking at yourself. You're looking at your own perception. What this shows symbolically is that from both an experiential and a theoretical level, you're looking at yourself, and in one moment, that thing that you're looking at that is not changing in external reality is angelic and beautiful. In the next, it's frightening and ugly or old or young or just different.

This is our dream, this is our perception and this is the external journey. We can go one step beyond becoming aware, and just like with our internal journey, we can become very adept at penetrating to deeper and deeper levels, thereby allowing a greater and greater variety of influence from the subconscious to template itself onto our external world.

What I'd like to kind of say about this is that this is the ultimate artistic tool. You can paint anything with a full auditory component. It's a multi-sensory world that you can create. Make no mistake this is no different from what you're doing every moment otherwise. So it's no more of a departure into fantasy than there normally is. All you're doing is interpreting the meaning of things in different ways and on different levels.

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So, in one moment, in one conversation, for instance, I can get stuck on how I perceive a person. As an example, if I'm having a conversation and I don't really like the person and what they're saying, using this method, I can initially recognize it – as you were saying earlier, a lot of what they're saying that I don't like represents things inside of me that I don't like. But even moving beyond that, by relaxing my perception, I can see them on different levels.

Igor: Right. That way you don't get stuck on that one person and create like an anger loop. Because you don't like them, that means you're sub-communicating with frowns and hostile vocabulary and so on to certain things. They respond defensively and, of course, that relationship deteriorates based on what you've projected.

Whereas to heal that, you end up seeing all of them, which means not just the fact that you don't like them, but the fact that you do as well because that person's potential is everything and so much more. At that point, you develop the freedom to be more successful in that interaction, and actually realize that the feeling of dislike of that person, you don't actually, dislike them you don't even know them.

You dislike what that person represents inside of you. So it gives you an opportunity to go uh-huh. Well, thank you very much for teaching me that inside myself I have this part that I need to start paying attention to a bit more and fixing my relationship with.

Russ: Exactly, and if you extrapolate that onto the rest of reality, then basically what we're saying is you can look at reality and find different meanings in it.

Igor: So this brings us onto an exercise that I quite like, which is the benevolent Universe metaphor.

◆ Can you talk us through that one a little bit?

Russ: The way I frame it is a little different from the way you frame it. What we're saying here, is that if you interact with the world on this level, you're centering yourself on the point that whatever's happening around me, I can learn from and use to become a pattern that I find better for myself to be.

Usually, that pattern has something to do with feeling open and compassionate and loving and profound. So if you use this model of whether the Universe as a whole is benevolent, we can hope for that, but certainly most of us, once we experience the feeling of benevolence inside of us, we want to be benevolent over enlightened self-interest because it feels great.

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This is where the whole dream yoga concept comes in. If we're saying that the entire world we experience is inside of our head, then we are the benevolent Universe really. So whether the outside Universe is benevolent or not if I am then my Universe is.

Again, this isn't just some kind of Pollyanna system of being nice to everyone all of the time. Sometimes people require firm discipline and boundaries, but what it is saying is if I viewed the world in such a way that I'm going to optimize my program. Regardless of what other people do and I'm going to take the lessons that life, my perception and my dreams give me, in order to do that, then you're really functioning at that high level of Shamanic potential within the external journey.

Okay, now we're saying there's a short-term external journey that we practice in the moment to become adept at it – you know, for like an hour a day. Maybe for an eight-hour ceremony in a week – but we begin to realize that every moment of our waking life is actually an external journey. This is a higher level exercise, developing this idea of in the moment, centering in the moment on what meaning can I take from this? What meaning can I pull from my subconscious to give me a more profound experience of life?

Igor: So to give a concrete example of what we mean in a, shall we say, relatively dramatic way, you can have an individual who, let's say they have an industrial accident. Maybe they lose an arm or a leg or something. Now if their point of view in the world is that it's just a random accident, it's bad luck, it's going to leave them pretty traumatized because they're now minus one arm in the world, and really they've not gained anything.

But if they ascribe to this benevolent Universe – we'll call it a fantasy for now, if we want. It's just a frame of reference. Then what they're forced to do is to say, okay, the Universe is good. It's giving me this as a lesson. What can I get out of this? Now it's forcing their mind to answer the question, what is a useful lesson to draw from this?

Then, rather than losing an arm they've gained a valuable experience, they've gained a richer sense of the world and it's probably worthwhile giving up an arm to have that, if they can find the lesson in it. But they'll never find the lesson if they don't look for it and they won't look for it unless the frame of reference they have of the world inspires them to look for it.

Hence, if you assume the Universe is benevolent and it's teaching lessons, that's a great assumption to make because it will force you to take lessons in everything and learn from them and, therefore, grow as a person and have these more – it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. You end up having more of these wonderful experiences precisely because you're giving yourself the opportunity to go and find them.

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Russ: This is why the benevolence of the Universe, is the fact that it gives you lessons and it's not necessary that you like the lesson that it's giving you in the moment.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: So that's the difference.

Igor: That's the difference. It's not a Pollyanna thing where you're saying, oh no, nothing bad is happening. No, I've still got both arms. No, I can't hear you. That's just self-delusion, which is not what we're ascribing to. We're ascribing to taking the reality of what's going on – the arm is gone that's it, fine, great, but now we're going to interpret that in a way that's beneficial.

It's there to teach me a lesson. It's there to teach me that I'm not my body. I'm more than that. I can have a great experience without it. It's teaching me that I have the infinite capacity to adapt to situations. So if I can adapt to this arm and make it a no brainer, well then, this other challenge in life will also be a no brainer.

So you're growing from the experience, rather than being traumatized and crawling up inside of a little shell to hide from the world, as a result, of it.

Russ: Yes and it might even be a difficult lesson, like my arm is gone and this reminds me of the fact that I'm going to die and I'm going to die soon, and maybe I should be using the moments of my life a little bit more profoundly than I have been.

So the lesson can be bright and sunny, or the lesson can be a little bit somber because there are sad things in life, but at the end, the somber things tend to give you as much wonder as the bright and shiny things. I think that interplay is important.

Igor: It's important, and this goes right back to the other journeys we took before. All the inner journeys can be mirrored in the outer journeys. What you just described, of course, was the shadow journey or a journey to recover lost power, and that requires us to go into the darkness as well. You can do it just as much with the eyes wide open, living your day-to-day reality as you can with a rattle guiding your way inside.

Russ: That's right exactly. I have nothing to add to that. That is exactly it.

Igor: Okay, so those are two very powerful exercises, and it's very clear how they form a progression. The eye gaze gives you a simple, finite experience of perceptions being altered and so on, and then we take that as an experiential

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reference point to say, okay, let's look at the whole of life as a projection that teaches us useful things, as a result of which we get to grow more.

There's a feeling that this is building up to something even bigger, a more important message.

◆ Could you kind of guide us through that a little bit?

Russ: Well, yeah, we didn't have a chance to go through the different levels of states of consciousness, but we've hinted and talked several times about something, which is where the sense of identity defuses.

This is known within Shamanic Yoga as Samadhi. This experience is documented all around the world, so it's not a dogmatic experience it's simply a psychological state, in which the patterns of the identity and of the perception have been opened up to the point that it is no longer differentiated from anything else.

This is one way that we use the term medically and psychotherapeutically for conscious and unconscious in the way we've been using it previously, which is we've got a conscious mind – which is the mind that we're aware of – and we have an unconscious mind – which is the mind that we are unaware of.

Another way of saying conscious and unconscious is we are awake and aware of the world, or we are not awake and aware of the world. For instance, a rock fell on my head and I'm unconscious.

Another third way that few people know about is conscious as being differentiated from other objects within reality, an unconscious being undifferentiated. This is very important to understand because this is where we get under the mystical level of the Samadhi experience.

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Igor: I think this is a very important point you're making. The kind of consciousness you're talking about now is the one that we typically refer to as self-conscious. We're so aware of ourselves that we are divorced from everyone else and we all know that when we get too self-conscious, it doesn't really enhance our experience and that's what you're hinting at right now, isn't it?

Russ: Exactly. Being self-conscious, having a consciousness and an identity is, as we pointed out, is an extremely useful thing. We evolved to have this thing for good reason, it is an incredibly powerful tool and gives us all kinds of options in life, and that's wonderful.

We will never live the potential of having that consciousness until we also remember what it is to let that hyper consciousness relax, so that we are feeling profoundly connected to everything. Because the whole point of this concept of consciousness or identity is the separation from, it's a difference from, and this is why we can become pathologically self-conscious or we can hardly function.

As you know, there are people like that because they're so self-conscious every moment that they're unable to get into the moment with other people.

Igor: They're the kind of people – and I know it because I've been there myself – where you're alone in a crowd. Everyone around you is having a great party, they're in the moment and having a fantastic vibe, and you're physically present, but emotionally you're in a completely different place. It's much more fun to have both. You're removed when you need to be removed, but when you're fully present, when it's useful to be fully present.

Russ: Yes. Now there's another level from being alone in a group, from being the way most people are connected to the group. Like we're having a party and we're all having fun and not being self-conscious. There's a whole other level where it's a continuum. You're unconscious of the fact that you are any different from anything else in reality. Yogis and Shaman have been working to master this experience for literally, millennia, particularly yogis.

What happens is okay, we're going to take this person who is on their vision quest. They started out looking in their mirror, watching their face change. Then learning how to witness the fluctuations in their own perception, they go out on the mountains, watch the clouds go by, let their perception open up and they see all kinds of incredible things.

I mean, they're not just watching rabbits float by. They're like whoa, this thing has meaning because it's coming from their subconscious they're firmly connected to it, so they feel this connection to the things that they're witnessing.

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The next level is the level where they feel such a profound identification with the thing that they're witnessing because the thing that they're witnessing is them, that there is no longer a differentiation between what is experienced and the self.

At that point, what happens is – you know, we can say this and it sounds very okay well, it's interesting. There's no difference between the experience itself, but the thing that is witness, in a very linear way – but what does that feel like? What it feels like is that you are everything, and everything is you. That, my friend, is an incredible experience.

If I could have one thing, one wish come true on this Earth right now for the betterment of my own life and for everyone else, which is obviously, going to influence my own life, it would be that every person on this Earth got this experience right now. Because what happens in it is you feel, instead of the differences, instead of the aloneness from everything else, you feel the similarities and the connectedness to everything else.

The only thing I can say is it's like going home, like your home is the most profound imaginable, and it is something that alters your life almost undoubtedly for the rest of your life, you simply cannot frame the world in the same way. What I'm saying is it's not something that we want to aspire to necessarily being in all of the time, although perhaps for some people, that would be relevant.

As our society evolves, perhaps there will be people who specialize in this experience and gathering information from this experience. This is what the true Yogis, of which, unfortunately, there have been precious few, but the true Yogis have always done, and what the Shaman have been there to do as well is to have a root connection to this world, to this experience, to this perspective, which they can then share with people who are more identity-oriented.

For most of us, the key is to be able to move, at least occasionally, from being our isolated identity to taking the broad picture and to move back and forth between them so that we have, let's call it the best of both worlds. The thing is one world optimizes the other. So, when we hit that reboot button, a lot of that self-defeating pattern just gets lost in the reboot, and the patterns that we have focused and trained – this is why this is best done in the context of training – get to assert themselves ever more powerfully.

Ironically, the diffusion of the ego, the diffusion of identity is one of the most powerful techniques, arguable the most powerful technique, available in reforming a healthy identity. It just needs to be done in a thoughtful, well-trained manner, of course.

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Igor: Wow! Again, we've gone from a very simple exercise, which is looking at yourself in the mirror, through something a little bit more challenging, which is maintaining this idea that the Universe is there to teach you lessons, and now we've gone ballistic. We've gone way on the other side and hopefully, people can see when they look at those three exercises that we're actually talking again, of a continuum.

There is doing nothing at one end which is, basically, sitting on your couch watching TV, which has its place in life from time to time. All the way to this extreme experience of melting of identity and so on, which can be reached through training, proper preparation and practice and so on and all of them can be reached in our normal day-to-day reality. We don't need anything special to get there, except for the discipline and the training to take us there over time.

Russ: Exactly.

Igor: I've got to say this is quite a big step.

- ◆ **How does this all relate to this idea that – we started today's call – this whole session before we even looked at the idea of the inner journey – with the idea of dreaming and dreaming realities?**

It seems that we're getting to the point where there's a full circle being turned, and we're starting again where we began, even though we've not actually gone back yet.

Russ: I'm going to finish the external journey in the same way I finished the internal journey, because this is very important for people.

What we've said is, if you take those exercises and start with your mirror eye gaze and you start to watch things shift a bit. Then you move out and you start seeing the entire world as your perception – it's not that there's not an underlying reality there, and we've described all this.

You're only seeing a tiny part of it in the first place through your sensory organs, of which there are many possible senses that we don't have that other species have, and of which our sensory organs only contain small amounts of information from the visible light spectrum, from the entire electromagnetic light spectrum.

We then deconstruct this, reconstruct it and experience it in our minds. So we are interacting with the world presumably, though some people question that. We're interacting with the word, but we're templating completely, everything we experience is in our mind.

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When we take that out into the world and we decide okay, so now that I know I'm looking at my mind, at least as much, if not more as an external world. I'm going to start asking myself what lessons my mind can teach me, watching my own perception shift, and practicing the same things I practiced in the mirror.

That is, taking on other points of view, loosening up my perception sometimes so that my subconscious is invited to play itself out, because now I'm taking ownership – and this is very important – taking responsibility and ownership over my perception.

This is what we must do, certainly as therapists, as Shamans and facilitators. As people who are supposedly aware and helping other people guide their perception, we better be taking responsibility for it, but I would argue that part of the reason why we're doing that work in the first place is it is part of the human condition.

We all need to be taking responsibility for that because this world that we create in our head, it creates our behaviors because we act and react from it. It's very sad in some cases to watch the way that people act and react, like in their own head, through their own perception, in a very unaware and destructive way. We all do that on some level.

So what we're really trying to do by taking responsibility here, we're saying okay, there's a world out there, but I'm the primary moderator of that world for myself, so not only am I responsible for the way I treat other people, but I also have a certain level of responsibility for the way I perceive them. This is a revolutionary concept.

I also have a responsibility for the way I perceive the world in general. So I need to, basically, allow that subconscious interplay and be connected to it because if I'm not doing that, I'm just pretending that it doesn't exist.

Igor: Right, which is the realm of self-delusion.

Russ: Absolutely and will lead to a place that we are right now socially and environmentally and politically, individually. So I can't do that. I have to let it go, and if I'm going to let it go, then I need to do it deep and I need to actually learn how the whole process works.

All right, so we get to that. Then by doing that, we become more and more connected, slowly but surely to this internal world, which we're projecting out which is our dream. A dream is just a perception without an external reality. Now we're saying we perceive on top of an external reality, but our perception is not necessarily so closely aligned with that external reality sometimes.

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So our dreams are active fully when we're awake, as well as when we're asleep, and at the high levels of this kind of experience, these kinds of vision quests and experiences are external journeys – we can be the continuum loops, and we are in a fully immersive world that is our subconscious.

Igor: Right. An example that everyone will have had at some point in their life, which is not quite what you're talking about, but it's kind of tending in that direction. We've all had the experience where we're like falling asleep, we're not quite fully asleep yet, but we're not fully awake either.

We're starting to have dreams already and perhaps the phone rings, but then something happens in us, a strong external stimulus, which is invading our dream world, and then something in our dreams changes. Perhaps someone starts – you know, you're in a phone booth suddenly, and it starts ringing, or perhaps there's an ambulance, but it sounds like a telephone ringing.

In other words, our dream reality adjusts to the external invasion of that telephone ringing sound, and we can see it morphing live in the moment to take account for a stimulus, which actually has nothing to do with the actual real world stimulus.

In the same way, we're doing this constantly at a more subtle level. It's just that we're not aware of it and what you're suggesting, I guess, is becoming more aware of it so that these dreams become more useful dreams, rather than the random dreams that we're used to.

Russ: Absolutely. That was a good way of describing it. There are loads and loads of research, and you can easily practice at home injecting external material into your sleeping dreams, and essentially that's exactly what we're doing in waking reality. We're having external reality injecting itself into our perception, overlaying our own meaning.

This is the point. When I went to say at the end, at a high level you can enter a space, which is, basically, a fully immersive dream, in your waking state in external reality. Well, the joke is that if you can understand it at this depth, what the Yogis and Shaman, and what I hope high level hypnotherapists, are explaining to people is that this is what we're all doing all the time.

We are all in a fully immersive dream all the time. It's just a question of what we're dreaming.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: Because our dream is our perception, and our perception may or may not interact with external stimulus in any one moment, but in every moment, we're a perception-oriented consciousness-producing machine.

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This is how we enter into the dream yoga element because now we've looped a high level internal journey. It makes no difference whether you're awake or asleep. At a high level external journey, it makes no difference whether you're awake or you're asleep.

This is where we move into dream yoga because the first thing to understand about dream yoga is it's not just about when you're asleep. This is a major problem in dream yoga studies that people misunderstand all the time; they mistake only lucid dreaming for dream yoga. That's not the case. Dream yoga is happening all the time in the external world. We're trying to ironically wake up, whether we are dreaming when we're asleep or dreaming when we're awake. The irony of the words dream yoga is that dream yoga is all about waking up.

Igor: Exactly. So the idea is that we are stumbling through a dream, even with our eyes wide open, and we can see it more clearly in some people than others who are really kind of locked into this hazy reality. They work, they watch TV and they have this one particular loop they run repeatedly. You try to get them to see this bigger, richer world, and they just can't do it.

It's just like someone who's fast asleep and you're trying to wake them up, but they're still groggy and they can't quite wake up properly. What we're doing is we're saying, let's stop being these groggy people who can't quite wake up and slowly but surely wake up so that whether they were asleep and dreaming or they're with their eyes wide open and walking through the world, we get to really choose our experience. We get to really be fully aware and be aware of this projection process.

Then, rather than being the effect of it, we can start being the cause of it choosing the realities we wish to inhabit so that we can be more successful and happier in life. We have these highlights that you talk about and see the fullness of reality which means, of course, the shadow side and stuff like that as well.

Russ: Well yeah, there's that. I mean I think that the way for your listeners to get their head around it is really that the processes, just like every process we've described, are the same in the internal world as in the external world. So what I want you to go to now is lucid dreaming because some of your listeners might not know about that, and I know you do.

Dream yoga is normally thought of deeply connected to lucid dreaming, much as Shamanism is often thought of deeply connected to journeying. Lucid dreaming, for those of you who don't know, is a scientifically validated state of consciousness where essentially – imagine you're in a dream right now, wherever you are when you're listening to this.

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You're in a dream that you're listening to this. Something in your dream seems a bit funny in one moment, like out of place or something. Ninety-nine times out of 100, you won't think about it because you're in a dream. One time out of 100, you might go, oh my goodness, I must be dreaming.

Now most people wake up from that state, but people who practice can stay asleep, and so they are literally asleep and immersed in the dream and fully aware that they're dreaming. When they do this, it can move to other levels, which we'll talk about very briefly, which are basically – okay, as a start, if any of you are wondering why bother?

You can do anything. You can be anything. You can change your body. You can go anywhere. If it's what you want, you can have sex with anything. If you want piles of gold, you can have piles of gold. If you want to go the moon, you can go to the moon.

The point is that's all at a very mundane level. I just want to finish this sentence because we've come from a very specific perspective. That stuff is all mundane compared to what you can do if you focus on what we've been talking about through this series, which is deep conditioning the identity and moving into the deep realms of the subconscious.

Then these kinds of sensory gratification elements no longer even become important. Just like you wouldn't want to be completely obsessed with money or sex in your waking life, there's no reason to be in our sleeping life. There is more to it than that.

What I want people to start with, because I think it's the right place to start is to get excited because that's how you get to practice. What lucid dreaming allows you to do is anything you can imagine and a whole lot that you don't even have the imagination for yet because when you exercise your imagination, it gets bigger. Anything you can imagine, plus a lot that you can't.

Igor: The only thing I was going to add to that is just to re-emphasize when people think about dreams, especially those who don't recall their dreams, might think of these vague sketchy things or daydreams and so on. What we're talking about here is an experience that feels more real than your normal everyday world does.

You can walk down the street and everything feels more real, seems more meaningful, is brighter and sounds are clearer. It's actually as real as your day-to-day world, but because a lot of the filters and consensual reality that limit your perceptions aren't there, it seems more real.

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Until you actually have the experience, it's very hard to describe, but it's a much richer environment that you find yourself in, even though it may – even when you describe it may sound the same, it's just so much more. So it is a very intense and very wonderful place to be. If nothing else, just as a break from whatever else you're doing.

Russ: Yes, but the place we want to go with this is that the reason – when you describe your own lucid dream, the reason why it's so sharp and beautiful and strong is because you're aware in it. This is where I'm going from the external journey. The fact is, is that how we differentiate a lucid dream from a non-lucid dream is the people who are in the dream recognize that they're dreaming.

Most people in a dream don't and, therefore, they're acting and reacting within their dreams. So when you're in a dream, the reason why it's so sure and real is because you don't even consider the fact that you're in a dream. So when the monster's chasing you or when you're standing at the checkout line at the supermarket, or when you're arguing with your partner in your dream, you never even think that it might be a dream.

So, if you think back to dreams that you've had, we're very emotional and reactive in our dreams, and we just kind of go along with the story. We may have this conflict, or we may have a nice dream. Sometimes we have nice dreams, and sometimes we have horrible dreams, but most of the time, we're partially an actor, but we're really being acted upon.

Now, the reality is this is the same as in our waking reality. In most of our waking reality, we're functioning at a very low level of consciousness. We're just kind of acting and reacting. We've already talked about the fact that most of your waking reality is actually your own perception templating onto some form of real world external reality, but how you perceive it and how you interact with it is very much yourself.

That's why some people like some people, and other people don't. It's not that the person's either likable or not likable. It's that they've got different perceptions of that person and different behavioral interactions with them. At its high level, what dream yoga is saying is, we need to become lucid, aware and awake when we're asleep in your dreams. You just train to do that.

It's a fairly simply process of training. It just takes a little bit of practice, a little bit of work. You need to do that because that teaches us a lot about ourselves because we're interacting with the fundamental levels of our subconscious. It's the ultimate hypnotic trance or Shamanic journey because there's no external environment interplaying and you're, basically, coasting from place to place in your subconscious mind.

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All of the elements that are there are there to talk to you and to teach you certain things. Just like in external reality, instead of talking to my girlfriend in an open, intelligent, listening kind of way and hearing what she has to say and learning from it, I'm determined to say what I have to say and only have that be the only reality, just act and react. This is what we do in our dream worlds. In order to make any sense or any headway in either of those worlds, we have to wake up.

Igor: Essentially, what this offers us is the ultimate laboratory to learn and experiment with things. It's kind of like taking the inner journey that we talked about before, but doing it on massive steroids because we're not even concerning ourselves about how far we get to penetrate anymore.

We've penetrated not quite as deep as it gets, but not far off as deep as it gets and we're doing it every night. If we learn to wake up within those dreams, the question of how much you penetrate becomes irrelevant. You're already there.

At that point, you get to have profound interactions, learn about yourself and, as you say, develop these relationships with parts of yourself that might otherwise make you suffer needlessly because they're trying to get your attention.

Russ: Exactly. Well, we talked earlier about the traditional medicines that the aboriginal people around the world use, and those are kind of booster rockets on your space capsule that you're launching into your subconscious. Well, this dream world is basically the root level, and it is mastering this world is basically strapping on those booster rockets, but having them just be a part of your normal physiology and part of your normal daily cycle.

Look at it this way. At the very least – a lot of people don't know that they dream because they don't remember their dream, but I can guarantee you that you dream. No matter who you are, you're dreaming because that's a normal physiological function. It's just a question of recall or non-recall. It's like a lot of people don't recall the structures of your day because we're on autopilot, right?

What you get when you master dream yoga is a steady continuum of consciousness, which goes from waking to dreaming states, where you can continue doing things that you want to do, regardless of whether you're awake or asleep. You gain several hours of life every day as an active participant in life.

Arguably, in the most creative, interesting, colorful, amazing, sometimes frightening, but overall incredible holodeck imaginable, and you're there awake, aware and you can literally sit down and say what do I want to do?

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I think I told you this when we were in Thailand, when I was in University I used to study for my exams by reading my textbook the evening before the exam. Then, I'd go to sleep and as soon as I went to sleep I would open up my textbook and all of the information stored in my memory that I normally couldn't access, because it was at deep levels of the subconscious, I could flip through my textbook and it was like this really crazy hyperlinking textbook.

I'd flip a page and it would go through a chapter, and it wasn't from the exact copy, but it had all of the relevant information, plus other information. Kind of like on the Internet. It was like well, when I'm studying early forms of hominids, like how does that relate to African culture versus European culture. So this stuff that wasn't in the textbook could be in the textbook because it's the entire contents of mind.

Igor: It's the sum of your knowledge.

Russ: Exactly. Everything that's ever passed through the tape recorder that is my system, and I could stay up in my dreams while I'm asleep happily for a couple of hours and then go to school and ace those exams.

This is why on this real world topic, it's like whether you want to become the ultimate golfer, academic, whatever it is, you can use it for this very mundane purpose of practicing, learning and harnessing your subconscious. But at the same time there is a deeper level available, as well, which is what we've been talking about the whole time. It's an entire integration of the structures of the personality and essentially re-wiring your own software to function how you want it to function. That's all.

It's not how I want your software to function. I'm not telling anyone else how to function, except I would prefer it if you didn't oppress people and you didn't destroy our plan. I think we need to have a conversation about that if you're going to do that. Other than that, do your own thing, be who you are because it's almost guaranteed if you're living at that level of integration that who you are is an incredible person. That's what I have experienced without an exception in over 20 years of this work.

When people dig down to this level and manifest it into the world and their day-to-day actions, they become the most mind-blowing, jaw dropping and inspiring people, which I think we all have that in us. I have a feeling that's what we all want to be and that's probably why a lot of people may come originally to hypnotherapy because they want to solve a problem, but that's that whole health is not absence of sickness saying.

It's like they're coming initially for that, but what do they really want? They want to be living huge, and this is what happens.

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Igor: It reminds me of a quote I think I mentioned in an earlier interview, which is the symptom path to enlightenment. Your symptoms are the torch that's guiding you to this greater life. Whereas, most people see them as these crippling problems that they'd rather just cut out and forget about. They don't recognize them for the signposts that say go this way this is the way for you to live this greater life that you've been looking for.

Russ: Yes. That is without question. Learning that is one of those meta-level learnings because as soon as you do that, your problems turn into your opportunities for growth. This is what we were talking about in the external journey.

When you turn your mind to okay, what is my lesson? How can I learn this process because I know that I am a computer program? I know I'm a program, so how can I optimize this program in this moment? When you do that, every moment changes forever.

Igor: Now let's take this down to a practical level. We've opened the field up about as wide as it can get at this point. Let's see if we can bring it down to some simple, practical steps that we can do because I know dream yoga requires many years of – it's just a vast topic and it has lots of practices and lots of places you can go.

- ◆ **What can people start doing right now, maybe today at the end of listening to this interview, to begin to practice this idea of dream yoga themselves?**

Russ: Sure. We'll do that very simply and on a fairly superficial level, but what I want to say is yes, to become a master Shaman takes some time there's no question. In fact, it is a never ending process. Really, even the term master is a bit of a misnomer because that suggests there's a finish point.

Igor: Right, it's more a changing of a path – oh look, the path looks a little bit more colorful today – than an actual oh this is it, I can sit down and stop running now.

Russ: What I like to think of it as, is like a black belt in Karate. A lot of people think like a black belt, wow that's like a master of Karate. But no, within Karate a black belt is a place where you have mastered the fundamentals and you will now spend the rest of your life learning how to deepen your practice.

Igor: Exactly.

Russ: This is the kind of mastery I'm talking about, it's very important. What I want to let people know is that actually, although that mastery is a lifetime of experience, even reaching a black belt level where you have your fundamentals totally sort of in place and you know what's up that's going to be a few years of work.

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But to become like a basic lucid dreaming or dream Yogi or Shamanic Yogi, Shaman, whatever you want to call it that can happen in a remarkably short amount of time if you're actually willing to say – do you remember, I don't know if it was a previous episode now that this has gone on for a while.

We were saying the intensity with which you bring your determination in a situation – if you bring total determination and you say, I'm going to do what it takes. If I need to like go on a course and like live this for a while, then I will. If I need to study a little bit at home every single day and practice a little at home every single day, then I will. If I need to like keep a dream journal and do these exercises, then I will. You better believe that I'm going to do this because it's important to me. I want it. Then it will happen.

You, basically, have to come to it with that. If you come to it with that I guarantee, anyone who's listening that you'll get your results and if you don't get your results, talk to me and I will get you your results. I've yet to see anyone – really, this is serious – I've yet to see anyone who truly cared and was willing to do the work that didn't succeed to a level that they didn't know was possible. So that's pretty good, right?

Igor: That's very profound. That's quite a motivating feat. I mean I'm sitting there going like, hmm, I think I'm going to up my practice from what it was before now.

Russ: That's what we all want to do because it's a reality and the rewards. I mean there's nothing that can give more rewards because it's a meta-skill. For instance, all of your interpersonal relationships are affected by it. Your work is affected by it. The very root stock of your every moment in reality, the hologram you're living in is it, so what could be more important?

Anyways, to put that aside, all I wanted to say is, yes, it takes a long time to "master," but I want people to know if they really want, you'll get it. You'll get it.

Seminar 2 – Part 6

Igor: Just to emphasize what you were saying there, the idea of being a lucid dream, you might very well have one tonight if you just follow some of the stuff we're talking about because I've just literally read a book on lucid dreaming once, and I had lucid dreams.

I didn't do it consistently after that that's where the training comes in, but you can have it tonight just, as a result, of listening to this program because your mind's going yeah, I want that I'm going to go for that. Then the trick becomes doing it consistently when you want to.

Russ: That's right. The reason why it triggers it is because you're thinking of it, you're aware of the dream within the dream. This is why this whole conversation, the reason why I'm spending my time doing this. I really honestly, in my heart, believe the same for you is because I know that just listening to the reality of reality is enough to wake people up just for a moment.

It's like coming up for a breath of air if you're drowning, and that little moment can make you have enough time to think and say, that's it. I'm going to start to swim. If you start to swim, then you're at it and that's what I want to see because we can do this. We can do this not just individually, but as a species. If we do this as a species, well, we can live in a substantially different world. I know that's what motivates you and that's why we're all friends.

Let's get into some techniques.

1. Number one is what we were just talking about, learn to take it seriously

I'm talking about the whole practice because really for this thing to come together, the whole practice, they're all interlocking cogs in the watch. Basically, each cog reinforces the next cog and that's the fascinating thing about the way that this system works. Each cog reinforces the next cog and then it goes all the way back to the starter.

What we're creating here is a machine that self perpetuates and focuses our consciousness on this whole reprogramming of ourselves. So we need to take the full practice into mind, but now to break it down just into lucid dreaming, you need to take your dreaming seriously.

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It is time to wake up about the reality of dreaming. Your sleep time, if you take this as an important thing, is just another valid and important part of your life. You just want to become aware of that important and valuable part of your life. You're living for several hours a day and you're unaware.

The metaphor that I always use about this is, imagine right now you're like in your doctor's office. Your doctor looks up over his spectacles and says in a deep voice, while smoking his cigar and sipping from his bottle of whiskey because he doesn't do most of the things that he says. He says, I have some bad news for you, but I also have some good news. The bad news is you have a condition and you don't even know you have it.

In this condition, you walk around like a robot for several hours a day. You have no idea of what you're doing when you're not there, and when you are there, you're just like a child. You're just acting and reacting with everything around you. You throw tantrums. You do anything that the most basic layers of your subconscious want in that moment because you're so unaware. I'm sorry to tell you this.

If you'd heard that you'd be like, oh my gosh. It would be like a crisis. Okay, so this is the reality. Now your doctor says, but if you're willing to do some relatively basic exercises and maybe take a couple of weeks or a month here or there and really study and take therapy in depth, you can cure this. You would probably be like, look, you don't even have to take any drugs. You don't have to have brain surgery, none of this. You just have to like actually make an effort. You would be probably like wow, that's really bad news.

You'd probably be incredibly motivated because you would be embarrassed and afraid of the things that you would do. You would feel like well, basically, the reality is if I'm losing two or three hours of my life a day, and I multiply that by 365 days a year, and I multiply that by however many years I have in my life, I'm losing like several years of my life, so you'd be motivated.

All I'm saying, I just used this to help people understand that what you have to gain, even just some of basic level like hours of existence, much less what you can do with them, which is a whole other area that we've already talked about. If you do take it that seriously, you will become fluid and consciousness through all of your states, that's just the reality, because you'll do what's necessary.

If you need to spend an hour at home, then you spend an hour at home. If you need to go to Peru, you'll go to Peru. If you need to stand on your head, you'll stand on your head because that's what you need to do. When people approach life that way, whether it's their business, whether it's some relationship, whatever it is, if you approach it that way, it comes out one way or another. That's number one.

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2. Number two is to start a dream journal.

The dream journal may seem very mundane, but this is how you do a whole lot of things. First, you start building your recall. It's like the classic alcoholic, the first step in changing a behavior is accepting that there's a problem. That goes back to our last one, taking it seriously.

If you don't accept that you have a little bit of a problem, like from the big perspective, if all of humanity had a continual stream of consciousness through waking and sleeping. If they could be awake in their dreams and do anything like manipulate information and tap into all of the knowledge they've ever had or go to all of the parts of their life– the memories, every single moment and learn from or re-wire the meaning of them and all of this kind of thing. If you couldn't, you'd be freaking out.

Igor: It's like, whoa, I've got to catch up here.

Russ: Yes. So, basically, the journal starts you down this road of recall and it's a way of saying external reality okay, I'm going to treat this as a serious thing and I'm going to build a practice around it, because the most challenging thing about the practice is just sticking with it. The journal provides a focus for sticking with it.

Igor: Which you can clearly tell whether, or not you've put an entry into it or not.

Russ: Exactly. It's like a cop and this is again why sometimes it's useful for people to do an experiential course on many levels and then I become the cop. But for now the journal is your cop, so it tells you whether you're practicing. What it will also do is it will let you see trends and themes, and these trends and themes will help you to identify when you're dreaming.

There are two basic ways of entering a lucid dream. One is – what most people who are in the lucid dreaming community consider the harder one, which is going straight from waking to dreaming without ever falling out of consciousness. So you actually watch yourself fall asleep. Most people in the lucid dreaming focus on waking up in their dream, and they do that by watching for things in their dream, which are called reality checks which don't fit with a normal reality.

It's like okay, if I see a hippopotamus that is pink with an umbrella dancing the can-can, I going to say am I dreaming? That's how a reality check works.

Igor: Then they can force reality checks a little bit by, for example, if you jump up every hour on the hour and ask yourself am I dreaming. One day you'll have such a habit of it and you'll do it in your dreams.

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Then if you jump up, but you actually float up in the air and you go, am I dreaming? Do I normally float in the air? No. Well, either something very weird's going on or I'm dreaming. That's one way you can create a habit that gets sucked into your dream, as a result, of which it forces the test that can help you wake up.

Russ: That's actually the next technique.

Igor: I apologize for jumping the gun.

Russ: No, don't at all. I mean this is why it's a conversation, not a lecture and that's what I like about this format. Basically, your reality checks are just a form of training. All of my students are forced to report how many reality checks they do a day because when you report, of course, you're motivated to do it.

When you get up into that 10-12 range, you're almost certain to start reality checking while you're asleep, and you will enter lucid dreams. To go back to the dream journal, it also functions as a way of opening up your recall because, again, it's like a muscle. So, as you bother to try to recall, one word leads to another word. I call it grabbing the tiger by the tail.

We start with the last hair on its tail as the dream is so fleeting and you're like oh well, I was in a donut shop, but that's all I remember. Then I'm writing, then there was a coffee cup and then I was looking in the coffee cup and I was a homeless person and on it goes. Then before you know it, you learn to recall your dreams.

The other thing is when you're doing that, you're actually setting a very firm intention to recall your dreams and that in and of itself helps you to recall them. Recalling is absolutely the first step in getting control.

Igor: Just a quick technical note on keeping the dream journal. For those who are interested in doing this, what might be a useful format? For example, if they're thinking, my God, what if I end up spending like five hours writing out my dreams because there might be so much content in it, or I don't even know where to begin with it.

- ◆ **Can you give us some guidelines in terms of what a journal dream might actually look and sound like, just to get a feel for what we're talking about here?**

Russ: This is the difference between day-to-day and intense work. If you were on an intensive and then what I would have you do is well, you've been there actually.

Igor: I have.

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Russ: What I would have you do is you have a certain part of your day, I control your day. We were talking about breaking down patterns, so one way is having the control of your day broken down, and you have a certain period of that day that is earmarked for dream journaling, so whatever you can journal in that time, you journal.

This is actually a useful method for you to use at home. You can say it's going to be five minutes. You can say it's going to be one minute. You can say it's going to be 15 or 30 minutes or an hour. You can say I'm going to write a book that is based totally on my dream worlds. I'm going to thread everything together, call it a novel and become wealthy and I bet you will if you do, because you'll be tapping into this incredible world.

Igor: Stop giving people my ideas.

Russ: Yes. It's my idea too. It's a great idea. It comes down to a question of point number one, which is how seriously you're taking it. So, if you want to make a dream journal a minute a day, then you can expect a minute a day results.

I'm not saying you have to do it for two hours a day, but I am saying the level at which you interact and consider this to be your life's work is the level at which you will succeed.

Igor: So you can go through phases where you say okay, these next couple of weeks I've got a lot of projects at work, so it's going to be like a five-minute journal each day. Then sometimes you'll have more time on your hands and you'll go, you know what, I think for the next two weeks I'm going to dedicate myself to doing an hour each day because I have extra time and I want to use it to go even further.

Your unconscious mind will quickly adapt and go okay, great. I guess this is an intense week, so here's "more dreams." It's not that you're dreaming more, of course. It's just that you're remembering more or remembering better.

Russ: That's right. We dream about the same amount every night. Some people don't know, but we dream about the same amount regardless of who we are that's another thing people don't know it's just a matter of how much you recall. I go through stages where I don't even dream journal anymore because my practice is very stable. So it's fine and I go through practices where I just want to milk that material. This is why again, intensives are useful.

You can do them intensive at home as much as you can like come to Peru and do an intensive. It would be a different kind of thing, but you can say, look, I'm going to take a week off and all I'm going to do is focus on my practice. I'm going to do this, this and this. We have distance education programs too and I suggest that people – well, it's part of the program is you do an intensive at

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home because it's a good thing to learn this and it's very empowering to self direct your education, as well as other things.

So journal, I don't care if it's a minute or an hour. If you journal at all, you're going to get some results. If you don't, you will have a much harder time. It is one of the key pieces of the puzzle. Take it seriously and journal. If you do those two alone, you're probably going to get some lucid dreams in your life.

3. The next one is the reality check.

We kind of worked through that, so I won't dig too deep in there but, basically, all you want to do is choose a phrase. Am I awake? Am I dreaming? Am I lucid? They all have slightly different meanings and, of course, when you dig into the whole concept of the fact that we're overlaying our subconscious over our waking moments, then I kind of love the am I lucid or am I aware?

That's my reality check because when I say that when I'm awake, the problem is I'm like, you know what? I was just driving on autopilot, drinking a coffee and thinking about next month or three years ago, actually I'm not lucid at all. In fact, I hope someone takes away my license. Do you know what I mean? I'm being like everyone else.

Igor: Yeah, exactly.

Russ: Not any worse, it's just that I'm not being lucid and aware, and I probably should be, so I like the way that question works. Am I aware? Am I lucid? For most people to start, am I dreaming is the best one because they're still compartmentalizing whether they're dreaming or not.

So, if you do that many times a day and document it in your journal this is what your journal is for. It's not just for your dreams; it's for your whole practice. Then eventually yes, when you're asleep, you're going to go randomly am I dreaming? Then you're going to look in front of you, and there is actually going to be a pink hippopotamus dancing the can-can and you're going to go, oh my goodness, I think I might dreaming.

Igor: Of course, if you see an antelope licking a watermelon, then you're not dreaming, because it's only the pink hippopotamus, that's your sign.

Russ: It's only the pink hippopotamus. That's the only thing I dream about.

Igor: If it's dancing rock 'n roll and not the can-can, you're still screwed because it's probably the can-can.

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Russ: Definitely. So you need to reality check based on many things as you're pointing out in a tongue-in-cheek kind of way. It is not necessarily going to be some kind of an absurd scene. There are many ways people reality check.

One of the ways is that they start to ask the dream characters certain kinds of questions to identify if they're dreaming or not. Another way is in the classic lucid dreaming world, there's a lot of turning on and off of light switches this kind of thing or reading of words. But you know, that's what other people have found, and I welcome other people's perspectives and that's great.

All I have to say is that I have found that I can read in my dreams. As I said, I used to study in the University. Before I even knew lucid dreaming existed as a concept in academia, I was reading textbooks. So, when people tell me if you want to do a reality check, pick up a magazine and see if you can read it and if you can't, then you're dreaming. That doesn't work for me.

Igor: They're just limiting their dreams at that point.

Russ: Exactly. They're limiting the power of what they can do in their dreams.

Igor: One of my favorite tests actually, and I think you probably do something very similar, it to test the laws of physics because then you can get this delightful surprise when in the dream they suddenly change. For example, you can push in a wall and if you can walk through it or push through it and it opens up somewhere else well, chances are that either someone slipped you a couple of mushrooms over your pizza or you're actually dreaming.

The same is true if you do a little hop in the air. If you stay up there, again, chances are high that you're dreaming. It's either that or you're pretty high.

Russ: Well yeah, we won't even go there. I mean I would like your listeners to know that I don't actually do – this is a very psychonautic kind of thing. I did a lot of explorational substances in my younger years, but I took nearly 10 years away from any form of medicine at all and learned how to do all of this by myself.

You can reproduce anything. The great thing is because your brain can create anything, you can reproduce anything.

Igor: This is the real power of the dreams.

Russ: Journeying and lucid dreaming. I mean whether you're awake or you're asleep, when you learn to alter your own perception, you can do anything. So, basically, there's no need for drugs, because you can do anything. It's fabulous because it's healthy for you in terms of your physiology and healing. It's non-addictive, all of these kinds of things, but yes, what you're tapping into is also a safety mechanism for lucid dreaming.

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I may as well bring it up now. What you need to do when you start practicing dream yoga is you need to treat all of the moments of your life with the same seriousness. This goes back to the first one. My dreaming moments are potentially as profound or more profound than my waking moments, and also I can do almost limitless things and experience almost limitless things in my waking and in my dreaming states.

By treating them all the same, we get a continuum of consciousness. The problem is people are people, and I guess they really need some training because I see some people and I have a lot of respect for people, but the reality is they do some crazy things, especially people who like medicines. This is why I focus on non-medicinal practices, although our school does use some of the traditional medicines sometimes to train people to learn how to do things on their own, which is a whole different form of training.

You need to use some safety procedures, and you hit the nail on the head. If you want to fly, never throw yourself off a building because that is stupid. I shouldn't need to say that, but you know people in history have actually done it because they weren't using common sense. They were not practiced and trained properly.

Igor: They were blurring the boundaries of realities, but in a way that was too haphazard so they got confused about what reality they happened to be in at that time, and that's where the problem comes in.

Russ: The problem comes in, in not using sound methodology. If you want to fly, don't throw yourself off a building, levitate off the ground. Frankly, if you can manage that in your waking state...

Igor: Come teach us.

Russ: ...absolutely. I'm all over it. The reality is that using the most simple, common sense methods, like a lot of these things some authority figures in medicine, politics, policing and these kinds of things have been negative about saying well, peyote is fine for Native people. However, if people do anything like this, they're going to go crazy or if you lucid dream, how can you tell when you're awake or you're asleep and you'll go crazy and microwave your baby and all of this kind of ridiculousness.

It's all solved by very simple things. Never microwave your baby. Never throw yourself off a building.

Igor: Whether it's in your dream or otherwise.

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Russ: Yeah, like grow up. This is the point. One reason why we create lucidity whether, we're awake or asleep, is so we can apply the ethical models that we have developed in our behavior to that world. This is where like, the Shamanic Yoga school differentiates itself strongly from the recreational lucid dreamers because again, everyone is entitled to do what they want to do as long as they're not hurting someone else.

But the fact is that you'd be wasting your time if you're learning to lucid dream so that you can act like a barbarian. Do you know what I mean? Things that you wouldn't do in normal reality, why would you do it because no one else can see you or because no one's going to throw you in jail why would you do that?

What we focus on doing is learning to develop a strong sense of healthy ethics, a beautiful life and living that life, whether we're awake or asleep. So this takes cares of all of the problems.

Igor: I heard a great quote, which is something along the lines, I think I'll paraphrase. *Ethics is what we do when we know that no one else is watching.*

Russ: That was in my course you heard that.

Igor: Was it really?

Russ: It was character.

Igor: There you go. That's what it was.

Russ: *Character is what we are when no one else is watching.*

Igor: Right.

Russ: So yeah, for sure. It's like don't do stuff in your dreams that you wouldn't be proud of doing and let's bring this all the way back to the start.

What are we doing? We're using this time when we're acting in the root of our subconscious to make patterns. Every moment everything we do is making a pattern. Whatever we do is leaving a trail. This is what Yogis call Karma. Karma is misunderstood. It's not like what you give is what you get. It's a little more complicated than that, so there's a pattern that you make.

What pattern are you making there in the depths of your subconscious? Are you making patterns that are, basically, warped and destructive that you wouldn't want anyone else to know about or you wouldn't dream of doing in normal reality because you could get caught? Is that going to help your psychology? No. All it's doing is reinforcing the cravings and aversions.

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What you're there to do is what you do all of the time in this work. You're there to rewire it at the fundamental level to create a perception and interplay with reality that is both profound and profoundly beautiful. It's only for self-interest, and your self-interest includes the interests of other people, and that's the miracle of this world.

This is where all of these problems disappear because when you do it properly, all it creates are healthy, kind, beautiful behaviors.

Igor: I like that, and this is something that we can all really aspire to, and it's ironic that our, shall we say, greatest aspiration in that sense is also our greatest shield. It protects us at the same time as enhancing everything around us. I think that it's very comforting to, shall we say, as we take care of ourselves, we take care of everyone else at the same time.

Russ: This is where you phrase 'your benevolent Universe' is a little different than I do. But in actuality, although we phrase it differently, it's so weird and wonderful the way that the actual physics of the Universe work because it's like that whole enlightened self-interest thing is the most incredible thing and the interplay between us and our environment, the whole way it works, it really is benevolent. It's just not like patting us on the head and giving us a lollypop.

It's like grow up. Be a good person, and you will live a good life and so will everyone else. It's like what greater gift could you give. It's the most benevolent thing in the world because the thing is instead of being like some nice parent that's spoiling us with candy, what its doing is it's being good parent and asking us to grow up into beautiful adults. It's empowering, and that I find really deeply remarkable. So I agree with you. It's like, wow!

Igor: Well, you know, Russ we've covered a huge amount of ground today. In fact, we spent longer today than on any other interview we've held so far, and I want to thank you for the stamina first to be able to carry on with this. I have a feeling that we're coming to the end in terms of what we're doing.

- ◆ **Is there anything else you want to do, in terms of talking about the actual dream yoga practice before we wrap it up in a conclusion and bring it all together?**
- ◆ **Or, is it time that we sort of face the end of this particular cycle and bring it all together in terms of what this all means for us as people and our society as a whole?**

Russ: I think that what we should do is very briefly go through just a couple more things, and I will make it brief. I'm tired too, and maybe even your listeners are out there having a great time though, but what I would like to do is make sure

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they get like – I mean the whole thing is this is taking a long time, but we're like a rock skipping on the surface. So I'm going to give you a couple more things.

If you ever do an intensive, if you ever get serious about this, you've got to get enough sleep because there are curtains between your states of consciousness, and if you're completely exhausted, as most people are when they go to bed, your system's tuned to like an on-off switch. The way that you eventually learn to lucid dream and to carry your consciousness through all the different states without losing it is by keeping that and not losing it in the first place.

We call that stalking your sleep, so instead of having like an on-off switch, what you have is a very gradual drift into sleep, much like entering a Shamanic journey. This is actually the process we practice.

You watch yourself fall asleep, literally observe your physiological function shut down and slowly but surely practice observing. When the dream world begins to form around you, you can actually watch it. In fact, it's one of the most incredibly things I've ever seen. I almost like it better than being in the lucid dream.

Watching a completely 3-D world form around me, that is something that is remarkable. It shows me everything I need to know about how my mind functions, let's put it that way.

That can't happen if you're an on-off switch. You have to make this a gradual process. So if you are not getting enough sleep – and most people are sleep deprived – then you're not going to have much of a chance to do that, are you? Because the minute you head hits the pillow, you're going to be like boom out, way down in theta and that's not going to get you anywhere.

So watching how you sleep is as important as anything, and that takes us into stalking your dreams, which I just talked about. You need to review your dreams on waking. You're not going to get much into your journal. Within something like two minutes, you've forgotten most of your dreams. So you need to review your dreams on waking, as well as making the firm intention when you fall asleep.

Before you go to sleep what you say is, I am going to keep my awareness, and you actually back that with your will. If you don't, you can hardly stalk your sleep, can you, because you're just like, yeah, I'm going to dream. Goodnight. Boom, out you go.

What you need to do is you need to make a firm commitment that you're going to ride the process and actually spend a little bit of time interacting with your subconscious before you fall asleep.

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When you're in your dreams, you have to observe your dream characters. Learn to observe all of the characters in your life. This is when the dream yoga when you're awake and when you're sleeping comes in. Actually learn to listen to people.

Making yourself more of an observer than necessarily always being the actor in your dream, what it does is it allows you to hear what other people have to say. That works really good in the external world, let's face it, but in your dream world what will happen is – if you're doing it in the outside world, you'll do it in the inside world.

What happens is that often times the dream characters have something to share with you, but they can't share it because you're too busy being crazy in your dream. You're thinking I've got to get my homework done. People have all these anxious dreams. It's like I've got to get to work, but I'm late, and they whole dream is built around being late and it's this progressive thing.

In this anxiety, they're incapable of actually observing anything. This is why relaxation training is so important. This is where I'm going to end it by reminding your listeners who are either hypnotherapists or aspiring hypnotherapists that when they're training, they're training to be Shaman and the primary physiological practice is the practice of learning control over your state of excitation and over what realm of perception you're in. That's called relaxation training.

If you have a relaxed stance to the world, that doesn't mean it's an apathetic stance. The most incredible actors, whether they are athletes or soldiers or politicians or Shaman or whatever they are, they are relaxed but aware. Relaxed but focused. Relaxed but strong and it's this that gives you your edge.

Igor: We have different kinds of phrases that different cultures use to describe that. We have people who are "chilled out." It doesn't mean that they're catatonic and then don't do anything or care about anything. It means if stuff happens, they can just take it in stride more easily.

That's what you're referring to, isn't it? It's the idea of being relaxed about it, but not to the point of not caring. It's not that you're divorcing yourself from the world. It's just that you're not instantly pushing back the minute the world starts coming your way. You're blending in with it more, rather than butting your head against it.

Russ: Yes, I mean that and I mean when you do that, you're then in the position of listening to reality because if you're hyper – and I don't just mean active. I mean you're focused on tension and anxiety and what you want to see. This is the rigidity of perception we've been talking about, what we need to do when we open is we're being the opposite, we're listening.

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When we listen, then our characters in our dream, whether they're in external reality, whether it's my partner or a monster from dimension (x), it allows me to actually witness them. When I do this, not only can I learn from them – yes, that's probably the most important thing but right now we're talking about how to lucid dream—this is the only way I'm going to notice that it's a monster from dimension (x).

If the reason why I don't do that when I'm in my dream is because I'm too busy with my own agenda. I'm like, oh the monster from the dimension (x) is going to eat me I'm so worried about that, that I don't even notice how ridiculous it is that there's a monster from dimension (x) in front of me. This is kind of how the whole world works.

So, it's by relaxing and actually paying attention. Like I said, in our journey example, it's like I'm bumping into a wall and then I take a look at where I am, and it's like, oh, I'm in this amazing cavern. This is our reality all the time. We're always like rushing through life, and what was the old saying? You don't take time to smell the roses. Smelling the roses is how you're going to notice what's going on. That's where we're going to finish.

Igor: That's kind of how some amazing discoveries get made. Like the classic one is penicillin. Instead of having your experiment ruined because a mold has infiltrated your dish, you suddenly realize that this mold is killing off bacteria, which means you could use this as a medicine.

That's part of what this relaxation, this relaxed attitude brings. You're not denying what's there and starting again and saying that's it. It's all been trashed now. You're saying, hang on a second. This is interesting. What does this have in it for me? Then a whole new avenue opens up.

Russ: You're relaxing your point of view, exactly.

Igor: I think this is a great place to finish it. We've talked a lot in terms of what this means for us as people and how this helps people who are therapists and even how the whole world can be a better place, as a result, of this. This is a powerful practice to do, whether you're just being totally selfish and want to do it for yourself – which I think is totally worthwhile.

If you're doing it professionally because you want to be a better therapist and do better work with people, you just need to understand what's going on inside them, and this is going to get you very attuned to these unconscious processes.

If you're into it for a social transformational point of view, well, the old saying of change the world one person at a time, you're doing that and you'll know how to change them because it's just a question of perception. If you're all seeing

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the world differently well, then the world will be a different place because we can't act the same way anymore.

Russ: Right. That sums it up nicely. I think I've said everything I'm going to say in this interview just because there's no way to encompass this topic. We've done our best to do it. All I can say is this is probably worth a little bit of thought. If you're hearing this, this is where I think a couple of moments of hmm come in.

All I can say is it is the greatest adventure conceivable and I'm left without words at that point, because my own adventure and the adventure of many, many wonderful people who I care about including Igor, who I'm going to finish my little piece by thanking because I got to meet Igor and work with Igor.

I learn from every single student that I work with. Igor was a fabulous person to work with, and I'm very thankful. In doing this project for you, is living exactly how we're talking about. That's what I love to see in this world is you're living the adventure of life and trying to help other people do it too.

Igor: Well, thank you for that, Russ. Your check's in the post, of course. But seriously, everyone, Russ has got a school. You'll find out more about this on ShamanicYoga.org, and as Russ just intimated there, I've actually been to one of his training. They're definitely intense – that's one way of putting it – in both the physical and the mental challenges and so on, but truly worthwhile.

If you have the time to invest in it; it's an experience you'll never forget and definitely worthwhile. As you can see or as you've heard from these interviews, Russ really knows his stuff. What I really like about the way you run your school, Russ, is that you're offering the traditional perspective so that people can see it in its cultural context, but at the same time, you're saying look, it's open to interpretation.

You take from it what you want. It's not my role to give you dogma and make you accept it and make you swallow it. You take whatever's useful to you. You make your own point of view. You have your own experiences. That's something that I think is to be cherished in a world where people try to tell you what has to be true, as opposed to what's worth exploring.

Russ: That's the only way that we're going to harness all of the wonder of all of the individuality that we have in the world, isn't it?

Igor: I agree.

Russ: When we all are focused on figuring it out on our own and then actually listening to each other and working together to blow this whole thing wide open, that's how we're going to do it. We need every single individual out there doing their own work and having their own way of seeing things and being able to

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shift into other points of view, be able to communicate and we can really do something amazing here. That is what I think we've been doing these last many, many hours.

Igor: I think this is the perfect point to draw a close to it. If anyone is interested in hearing more about Russ' work, visit his website ShamanicYoga.org, he's really got every level of course. From a simple correspondence course, which will require your personal discipline where you can do it at home, to flow blown six-week, eight-week or two or three-month– I like to call them boot camps because they're that intense – out in the jungles of Peru or other places.

Really, there's a whole spectrum. You'll find out more about that. You can contact Russ directly because he's very open and, as you can see, very approachable. So I do encourage you to do that if you're interested and you liked what you heard here.

In the meantime, all I have left to say is Russ, thank you for first, a marathon effort today, and for sharing so much of your knowledge, so generously, on the whole set of interviews.

Russ: Thank you very much. It's a total pleasure, and I could sit and talk with you all day as you know. It's a great time. I look forward to seeing you again whenever I get the chance.

Igor: As do I. We'll be doing this again in the future at some point, rest assured.

Until that time folks, this is the end of this interview series with Russ.

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End of Seminar

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

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

Meet Your Host

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

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

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

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

www.StreetHypnosis.com