

Trance and transformation: hypnosis, self-hypnosis, meditation, herbal-trance and the Natural state.

There are many mental states where it is clear that what is going on is not “normal”. Humans pursue these states mainly because of the grand irritation and sufferance of the human condition of “self”. As ever, when within a state of dis-ease the human moves towards something to help him/ herself alleviate the problem, inevitably this is going to be an act that come from the deranged state of “self”. We might know there is something wrong, but to believe we know how to resolve it is beyond arrogance, it is dis-ease. Everything we do in daily life that is conscious is going to be a move towards attempting to “do” something about our situation and very often a rejection of how it is.

In this article I would like to look at the main forms of technique that there are and to point out the nature of the “self” within these situations. I want to point out is that for most of the states we go into there is considerable control involved. The natural state of the human occurs only when the person is in a situation not created by “self”, they have in fact moved into a spontaneous expression, which is a rare occurrence. Let’s look at the ways:

Hypnosis:

Hypnosis has a focus on striving to resolve or fix a state of a patient’s psychological state. It is goal-orientated. The key thing that happens is a practitioner, by whatever means, helps to allow a patient to move into a trance state that is simply a deep place of relaxation, which is not quite asleep but is awake to suggestion. The theory is that the patient’s conscious mind is asleep but the sub-conscious is awake to suggestion. There is a passivity of the patient in this state and so the onus is on the hypnotist to have totally clarity and insight into the process of the patient (and all of nature come to that!), and to put in suggestions which, when the patient wakes up fully, will then be part of their newly-informed conscious mind. The idea is that by re-adjusting the sub-conscious the conscious mind will follow suit. This is of course a big general view.

While the patient here is possibly in a calm state, the problem lies in the whole approach of the practitioner being the foundation of health and insight. If the practitioner has any shred of dualism within their expression this will be passed onto the patient. If they have any ideas or illusions of their own these too are passed on directly to the patient. Hence the process is very much like a “self” implant, as well as the patient’s “self” there is now a practitioner “self” inside them. Yes, potentially this can help with specific issues, but one can see how it could also hinder and how brainwashing and abuse can be so easy within this kind of situation, even unintentionally. Trance itself is fraught with difficulty as it employs one “self” to effect another “self” and assumes that the practitioner is healthier than the patient...this is a huge problem.

Hypnosis is quite limited for returning to the natural-state. It is mainly limited by the practitioner and their own ideology but also by the patient’s ability to let go into that state. If we are talking in relation to something natural, hypnosis is extremely full of “self” in its whole expression, there is very little allowance of nature to take its

course, it is very active, the whole thing is done with the directorship of a practitioner. In the ancient world this kind of process would have been through a Shaman, but very often the Shaman was on a mind-altering substance before they made suggestions and became involved in engaging with their patient, therefore their actions were *not* their actions but those of a more natural expression. Although even then the act of “healing” is in itself not a natural function. Look at the natural world, there are no “healer” animals, only humans make this distinction because fundamentally only humans have dis-ease.

Self-hypnosis:

These are techniques where a person will act as their own practitioner, either under the auspices of their practitioner or through their own direction. This again is goal-orientated, the human mind wants to adjust and fiddle with that is going on inside the person’s situation. But this time the person is involved in their own issues. If they are doing self-hypnosis the ideas of what they want to introduce to their own mental state will often be from outside, such as the ideas of a teacher or a book. This is an extreme version of intention, so then how would it be possible for spontaneous change to occur? All that happens is that sub-conscious patterns can be uprooted but this does not resolve the “self”. As a result the neurotic pattern may resolve but very often it may occur somewhere else in another way. The issue is that because the root of the problem is not resolved, i.e. the “self”, all you are doing is fiddling with symptomology, it is focused on symptom patterns rather than the original root of these symptoms.

Meditation:

While meditation and self-hypnosis vie with each other as far as intention goes, it is suggested that meditation doesn’t involve intention and that hypnosis or self-hypnosis do. While the idea of meditation is not to have intention, suprisingly enough it is the place where the greatest intention of all is found. The intention of most people who meditate is almost always a process of some kind of self-development. For the most headstrong it is about enlightenment and the achievement of ending of the “self” and for the person who is suffering from stress it is “to feel more relaxed”. But no matter what, meditation is fraught with the very thing one wishes to avoid, whether it be mindfulness (a perfect word for it!) to the deepest Zen, this is always following a traditional ideology that somewhere down the line “effort = reward” and that “effort brings success”. However these are the poverty of a “self” state in deep conflict. The problem with meditation is always the nature of the “self” that determines when or if one should do it, for how long and what it means. There is very little spontaneity. Of course this doesn’t rule out the people who just do it because they like it, and in a way this is really the only true reason to do it, if there is a genuine liking and wanting to go towards this then there is no “goal” other than this and it is instinctive. Herein lies a possibility of change as the “self” isn’t trying to gain anything. But then there should be no guilt at not having done it, no worry if it doesn’t happen again for a while, i.e. the spontaneous nature of doing something you like needs to be there too. This is rare with meditation as usually it is driven by the self.

Herbal-trance:

The Shamanistic cultures use psychoactive herbs in groups where the leader will simply hold space for the group while they go through the mental change that ingesting specific herbs such Peyote, Ayahuasca, or San Pedro and others will elicit. The big difference is that the intention doesn't count. When a person initially enters the state of the herb they may have an intention about what they want to do or let go of or whatever, but this is actually bypassed by the nature of the herb which resolves the "self" state. Of course when one goes into the state of the herb one may believe that one can "ask for what you want" but actually the very thing that needs to die off is that aspect which wants to "do" something. Hence there is a tremendous struggle that can ensue in the taking of herbs like these where a person will want something to resolve but won't be able to break through the herb's expression in the body. So they may become very sick and purge or they may find themselves have a "bad trip" or what the native Peruvians call "wrestling". However when something lets go of this process, then the herb reveals the natural state of the human being and opens them outwards which can sometimes involve a satori or an "awake" state which lasts for a while while the herb is active in the system, then often dissipates afterwards. The action of the herb shows the human body the nature of reality, however it is so hugely different from normal human activity that it is very unclear as to how this is absorbed afterwards. It is true that huge processes can unravel spontaneously in this process and it remains the closest of all the above expressions to the natural state because unlike any of the others it is absolved of intention, no intention nor ideology of good or bad can enter into this kingdom as it is literally nature within the body.

Many healing situations and exercises whereby the body is allowed to go into spontaneous cathartic expression or a calm healing state are akin to this kind of method above because while there is an intention it is then resolved by the body's own dynamic re-balancing. Many healing intentions can be too fraught with difficulty and dualism, but sometimes when the practitioner is allowing, then resolution can occur by itself and the "self" state alters. Because the "self" state seldom if ever completely busts open, then it often means that not much has actually changed, the symptoms just shift around and form a problem somewhere else. This is the nature and limitation of human intervention in healing.

Instinctive trance (innate-meditative-state):

I've put in this category because it covers all those situations where a person simply wants to just sit or stand, there is a sense that one wants to just do this for some reason and it simply feels good or better to do this. This is actually simply a response to the tension and general tightness that occurs for humans in the upper body because we simply over-use this area. There is an instinct that returns the body to senses and this is a response to the tension, a want for the reverse. Many children exhibit this kind of behaviour, wanting to be away from loud noises or difficult situations, they can often just sit and "rest" and this simply is a response to the trauma of what's going on. There is no or very little intention here, it's just a realization that it feels better to do such a thing, very often a person won't have any meditation practice as a formal expression but they simply know it. It's a kind of turning off, like taking a nap in the day, it is a movement into trance state to recover, the "self" state will quiet at these times but will not drop out very often.

The Natural State.

The natural state is that of the human animal and is a very rare occurrence for the human at its current state of existence. Two spokesmen of this expression are U.G Krishnamurti and Tony Parsons, where the “self” state has somehow resolved itself. This very strange occurrence is something that many people want but very people actually “experience”, because as Tony Parsons points out it is not an experience but a realization that there is nothing to “do” or “fix”. The difficulty is that most of us live in a world dominated by “self” and dualism. The Natural state could be called “enlightenment” but it isn’t someone who gets enlightened, it is the realization that there was no-one in the first place to become enlightened so the “ego” state has utterly collapsed in on itself. This rare expression is still the ultimate as far as change of “mind” goes. It cannot be found and as such this occurs spontaneously from nature and this is why at this time in history it is so rare.

It is important to be able to see the spectrum above because it is very easy to say that people should attempt to do this or that, seek out meditation and yoga and all kinds of methods of “changing”, but if the goal is there and the goal is a deep want for “self” to resolve then very often there will be huge disappointment. The quieting of mind and calming of tension is one thing but the origin of this tension and the reason it comes back time and again is something that is unfathomable to the human mind and activity to resolve. As Fukuoka Masanobu expressed “the human being will never understand nature.” It is vital to realise this, we cannot manipulate that which we cannot understand, we are only fiddling in the dark with things like hypnosis. The more we let go into the realms of allowing meditation to spontaneously come upon us, whether through the help of herbs and other things which help us to see that force and intention are not the way of nature, it will help us to see the reality of ourselves, the human animal expression that we are. In the end it is trust in the Unknown or the faith in Nature that allows us a forgetting of idealism and a blending with life.

"WILD GEESE"

by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --

over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

David Nassim
29/6/2014