

Hypnosis: The Trance Experience

This handout is all about the very basics of a hypnotic trance experience and what goes into it. Trances are natural states of mind that we go into when we need more concentration and focus than consciousness alone allows. For example, imagine you're driving a car, adjusting the radio to bring in a favorite station, thinking about all the things you need to do today, and planning what you think you want for lunch. You might find that time has past, but you can't remember what has happened during the last half-hour of driving. That is a type of trance state. The same thing can happen when you get so drawn into reading a book or watching a movie, or when you're playing a game with a close friend, and time just flies; those, too, are trance states.

Hypnotic trances are basically when someone, like me, guides you into a trance state. Basically, I would typically guide you to focus on a sensation or an object or a word or a sound, so that all else can just fade into the background and you can use that focus to follow my instructions, experience my suggestions, and notice how good it can feel to follow my instructions and experience my suggestions. Different people will have different experiences of trance: some may feel deeply drowsy, some might experience blurred or sharpened vision, some might feel warmer or cooler, and some may not notice any difference between their current state and waking reality. That's because everybody thinks and concentrates differently. That said, regardless of how you think, your unconscious mind will take proper care for you while you're in trance: instructions and suggestions that "feel wrong" won't be followed, you will wake safely and easily if the situation warrants (like if you needed to react to some emergency), and if something somehow happens to your hypnotist while you're in trance, you will come back to awareness, feeling great and rested, any suggestions beyond ones you want to keep fading to nothing. Your unconscious will keep you safe.

Additionally, there are things you can do that can help make your hypnotic trance a better experience. If your physical needs are met (you've had food and drink recently, and you've gone to the bathroom), you will generally have an easier time going into trance. If you're dressed comfortably for the local climate, you can feel more comfortable going into trance. If you're sober and well-rested, your mind can concentrate better, and that can give you a much more enjoyable and useful hypnotic experience.

Beyond that, hypnosis, at least the way I do hypnosis, requires only three things: 1) that you follow my instructions as well as possible, 2) that you experience my suggestions as completely as possible, and 3) that you enjoy following my instructions and experience my suggestions as much as possible. If you can do and are willing to do these three things, you can go into trance and experience the benefits of it. Trance, much like everything else human minds are wired for, is something that we're meant to experience. By all means, make the most of it.