THE RONNING GUIDE TO MODERN STAGE HYPNOSIS
How to Start from Scratch, Hypnotize any Group, Create a Satisfying Show, and Have as Many Bookings as You Desire in 21 Days!

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SECTION I

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HYPNOSIS
Stage hypnotists are some of the highest paid and most sought after entertainers in show business. It is the kind of entertainment that can be performed almost anywhere: clubs, casinos, schools, corporate offices or conferences, cruise ships, and all manner of community get-togethers. But on a deeper level, stage hypnosis is a big draw because it is fascinating entertainment performed in front of a live audience. Friends, neighbors, and co-workers watch in amazement as their fellow audience members become part of the show. It’s great fun and, for those seeking a career in this profession, it can be enormously rewarding both personally and financially.

This book is designed to help you, the budding stage hypnotist, plug into that growing market of exciting venues for this type of entertainment, to learn the business from the ground up, to begin to hone your skills so you can build and develop as a great performer…and to make a very good living in the process.

But how can you make the most of your abilities in this great business?

The answer is twofold: offer a “killer” performance at each and every show and, THIS IS IMPORTANT, know how to get bookings, the show dates that are the lifeblood of your business.
If you are really interested in becoming a successful stage hypnotist, this book will give you all the information you need. It is going to be up to you to apply this winning formula with hard work, dedication, and persistence. But, if you do, I can almost guarantee a bright future for you and your family.

I can hear the naysayers and the skeptics already. “Who is he to make such a claim? How can he say that he can teach me to be a success in this field?”

That’s OK. I like a little challenge and I can understand your skepticism. I’m the same way.

Let’s tackle each of these questions separately.

JUST WHO IS GEOFFREY RONNING?

I am a very successful stage hypnotist who has delivered top notch performances to delighted audiences all over the country for many years. I work with my wife and partner, Wendy Ronning. As a measure of our success, we are invited back for repeat performances by almost all of our clients. This is not some part-time gig for me; nor am I semi-retired. This is how I make my living.

Need more convincing?

I’ve gone from successful stage shows in Seattle to hypnotically programming a golfer from Melbourne, Australia, to improve his game. I have performed at thousands of live shows in a variety of venues from small intimate, exclusive groups, to entertaining huge crowds of 22,000-plus at the Gorge Amphitheatre in George, Washington.

I have published twelve stage hypnosis educational programs and currently market more than forty hypnosis products. Recently, I starred in a television pilot with a hypnosis plot line called Sleepers.
I have appeared on more television programs and radio programs than I can remember!

As a Certified Hypnotist and a Certified Instructor of Hypnosis, I keep abreast of the latest advances in the field and pass this information on to my students.

One more important thing: I know how to book shows and make money with entertainment. And I know I can teach you this critical part of this business.

In 1997 my wife, Wendy, and I began The Stage Hypnosis Center at the request of other stage hypnotists who saw our success and wanted to duplicate it. Our goal was to help others improve their businesses. But in doing this, we have managed to help hypnotists all over the world and in the process become, according to our students, “the most successful stage hypnosis training on the planet.”

Visit our website (www.StageHypnosisCenter.com). Read about my success in this business. Even better, take a look at the many testimonials. Go into the discussion forum where former and current students tell their personal stories of success. You can literally track their success by searching this forum and read their honest opinions on my methods and products. It’s a far better endorsement than me telling you how great I am.

After you spend some time on the website, my hope is that you are convinced of my qualifications and expertise in stage hypnosis. Perhaps you noticed that I did not put my professional certifications first. As far as I am concerned, my most valuable credential is that I am an accomplished, financially successful stage hypnotist with first-hand, up-to-date knowledge, and many accomplished students to show for it. I think stage hypnosis is the best entertainment business in the world and I’ve had a lot of time to make that determination.
My goal with this book is to take that initial interest you have in stage hypnosis and help you turn it into a life-changing experience.

WHY DO I WANT TO HELP YOU?

I want to share what I’ve learned for two very important reasons:

First, believe it or not, I get a tremendous amount of satisfaction helping others succeed. More and more, for me, the real thrill of this business is watching my students make it. Nothing pleases me more than hearing of one of my protégés giving a great performance or building a terrific business from scratch.

How can you not get excited when you hear about a student who paid off their mortgage early, or another who was able to quit a boring day job, or a woman who was able to spend more time with her family because of stage hypnosis. These are real people sharing real stories.

The second reason is the financial reward. If you succeed, I will too. The more your business grows the more likely it is that I will be involved in that growth with training materials and support. So, I want to be your partner. I offer you a real plan, with verifiable success, from a leading expert in stage hypnosis. If you take the time and effort to apply this knowledge, we will both become very wealthy…together!

I want to develop a long-term relationship with you, one that is mutually beneficial for both your family and mine. And, I should point out that many of my students and www.StageHypnosisCenter.com members have been with me for years. They are regular and happy buyers of our training materials. These savvy entrepreneurs would never continue to hand us money unless we were making it well worth their time and effort.
This can be your story, too. With hard work and energy, you will succeed.

**WHY DO I THINK STAGE HYPNOSIS IS THE BEST SHOW IN THE WORLD?**

To me, a stage hypnosis show is the best show in the world because it is based on audience participation. It’s packed with hilarious interactions and demonstrations of the amazing power of our minds! But this just doesn’t just happen. It depends on careful preparation and planning.

Since you decided to become a stage hypnotist, your main objective should be to entertain the audience. Always keep in mind that a great show is not just a spectator sport, involving the audience is what puts this show in a class by itself. A key to a great show is figuring out what your audience wants and then constructing your show to satisfy those requirements.

When I do my show, I concentrate on the entertainment component. But a really good stage hypnosis show is not only entertaining; it also has meaning and purpose. While the hypnotist should offer a compelling performance, the real stars of the show are the volunteers drawn from the audience.

Let’s consider these objectives.

First, the best shows are full of audience participation. Your audience will laugh endlessly, applaud wildly, urge volunteers on, and have great fun. The best show in the world uses the talents of the volunteers to create new, exciting, and innovative shows each and every time. Perhaps one of your volunteers will hold his pet elephant while introducing it to the audience. Maybe a volunteer will meet her favorite movie star or singer...and it just happens to be you!
Second, a show must have continuity, meaning, and purpose. The best show in the world is not just a bunch of routines thrown together haphazardly. Every performance, like every good story, has a beginning, middle, and an end. It has a structure that your audience can see so that they can get the maximum benefit and fun from their experience.

I’M QUITTING ON MONDAY!

This private corporate show was fun. The audience was laughing hysterically and the applause was overflowing.

Following the show one of the women who had volunteered asked if she could talk to me privately for a moment.

She took me outside and told me volunteering for the show changed her life. She said for the first time in years she felt relaxed, clear and focused.

She was about thirty years old and in terrific shape. She was trembling with excitement. She told me she had worked for this corporation for the last several years and until tonight, she did not realize how much life it had drained out of her.

Sleep was difficult for her, she never relaxed anymore, and she had no social life. She told me she wanted to fall in love, get married, and have children.

I listened.

She said on Monday she was quitting her job and reclaiming her life. She gave me a big hug and thanked me for giving her back her life. She meant it.

The impact we can have on volunteers is nothing short of miraculous; the value we bring as entertainers is only
overshadowed by the impact we can make on our audience. This profession has many levels of personal and professional satisfaction. Start doing your own shows and you will experience them as well.

The stage hypnosis shows are terrific because the audience learns something about themselves even while laughing, having fun, and watching volunteers on stage being the stars.

And perhaps most important, hypnosis shows can change people’s lives.

It’s true. (See sidebar one, page 8.)

You would think that this would be more than enough for the best show in the world, but there is even more! Consider these benefits:

1. This kind of show is very portable, it can be done almost anywhere in front of almost any kind of group of people.

2. You are not going to spend a lot of money on props or expensive equipment.

3. A great moneymaker—executive income without the executive headaches.

But a warning about number three: this is not a get-rich-quick scheme, even though it may seem like it because success can and has come fast to some.

I don’t say this lightly. I have many students who have quickly gotten up and running full-time and earned mid-five-figure incomes in their first year. Many of them had never been an entertainer; they had worked full-time in other positions totally unrelated to show business. Now they have a successful stage hypnosis career. You will meet some of them later.
But remember, while I can give you the fundamentals to succeed, it’s up to you to put in the work. You are the person who has to create that skilled, smooth stage performer. You are responsible for carefully planned routines. You must put in the rehearsal time, the study, and the energy and enthusiasm necessary to become a successful performer. This book can offer a lot—a plan, critical training advice, real world experience, success stories—but the crucial ingredient is your work ethic and persistence. You need to act. Will you?

If you do act and apply yourself, you will be hypnotizing volunteers, staging super shows, and booking as many venues as you can handle all within the next twenty-one days. Some may see that as a tall order, but I can guarantee that if you follow my advice, it is 100 percent achievable, even if you currently have a full-time job.

In fact, if you want to jumpstart your success, you can find lots of freebies right now at www.StageHypnosisCenter.com/bookextras.html. So, let’s get started.
CHAPTER 1

SUCCESS CAN BE YOURS

WHY THIS BOOK IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR SUCCESS

Why read *The Ronning Guide to Modern Stage Hypnosis* when there are other hypnosis books out there? Before I answer that, let me emphasize that over the course of your career you should read all the other books available. I’m a great believer in lifelong learning. I spend a great deal every year on education. I consider it my greatest return on investment.

One of my favorite sayings from Jim Rohn is “Poor people have big TVs and rich people have big libraries.” So I encourage you to read everything you can get your hands on. Study every resource available. Listen to all the audio programs. Watch all the DVD courses and attend all live training you can.

But for ultimate success, I think it is important for you to have one mentor at a time. I would recommend that you manage your training regimen by concentrating on one expert at a time. Trying to split your performance and business objectives to satisfy multiple mentors will dilute the full value of what you are learning. If you
try to combine too many disparate philosophies at the beginning you will end up with a mess. Too many cooks spoil the broth.

So I suggest that you study everyone eventually, but to achieve success you can only follow one mentor at a time.

So what is important and different about this book? And why another book on stage hypnosis?

There are five significant differences between my book and the others I’m aware of. I don’t point out these differences to disparage those other books. I’m sharing the reasons I wrote this book and the value you should receive from my book because of those differences.

The first and most important difference is that everything you will see here is about MODERN DAY stage hypnosis. The old stuff is great to read and can be very valuable, but I provide you with real tools for the real world of today. I have read the greats. I know all about what Mezmer, Braid, Esdaile, Elman, and Erickson added to the field of hypnosis.

It cannot be overstated. It is the foundation of all we have, but times have changed.

Secondly, this book is the culmination of several years’ effort to create the modern day stage hypnosis techniques that are successful with contemporary audiences and today’s modern demands for both artistic and business success.

Thirdly, the book is about empowering you to be the best you can be. This book is not about reproducing the best show in the world! I don’t want you to reproduce anything. What works for me and for my audiences will not be the best for you and yours. It has to be your show to be a great show. In fact, although there are many things that I know will happen in each of my shows, no two shows have ever been exactly alike.
I will give you the tools you will need to create your very own Best Show in the World every time you perform. Because these tools are an important part of my unique approach, each time you are introduced to a new tool for your toolbox, you will see this symbol:

This book will provide you with tools that will make you razor sharp to deal with any and all show situations.

The fourth difference between my book and the others is that I provide you with practice exercises. This is more than a how-to manual. It is also a workbook. I break down the steps into manageable pieces and provide you with exercises to help you understand the concept under consideration so you can practice the technique. Each exercise is marked in this manner:

Doing the exercises is not an option if you truly wish to learn from this book. You must do them. I cannot emphasize that enough. In my live training course you get the benefit of working with others, hypnotizing multiple people, and getting the confidence that comes from being there. With this book you are on the honor system. That’s why the exercises are so important. If you are reading this book while experiencing our DVD home study course you will see me challenging the students. You can see the results as the participants become more skilled and confident.
Witnessing the enthusiasm of our hypnotist-trainees is incredibly inspiring. If you have our Home Study training materials, watch every minute—there’s a lot to be learned on each DVD. As with any course of instruction, the effort you put into studying directly impacts your learning and retention. The exercises in the course are essential to your success in becoming a hypnotist. Simply reading won’t do the trick—you must DO the tricks.

And finally, the fifth reason: Hypnosis has been very, very good to me. It has literally changed my life and enriched it beyond words. I hope that this book will set you on the path to achieving the same rewards we have enjoyed. If you are like me and many of my former students, you will learn more than just how to create a spectacular stage show—you will improve your life in more ways than I can say.

Imagine right now how it would feel if someone invited you to perform your stage hypnosis show for their group. Imagine they handed you a nice check for having fun. Imagine hearing the sound of the audience’s applause, feeling the love of the audience, and seeing the audience laughing hysterically. Notice how your body feels having completed a successful show.

Notice how good you feel depositing that significant check into your bank account—how great it is to earn money doing something you so thoroughly enjoy. Imagine your well-earned sense of pride after doing a hot show that everyone enjoys and raves about—a show YOU made happen. Imagine having access to the secrets gleaned from years of stage hypnosis shows, and the confidence you radiate. After all, you’ve learned your craft from someone who has truly been there on that stage. What better teacher can there be?
That is what I am offering you in this book. That is why, if you follow my training, your life will change.

One more thing, as you’ve probably noticed, I am not shy about addressing the financial benefits of this career. Stage hypnosis is my business and as such the financial aspects are an important component. My desire in writing this book is not necessarily to increase the number of stage hypnotists, but to improve stage hypnotism overall, which will bolster the financial success of all its practitioners. The better all our shows are, the more successful each of us will be.

I know that you would not be reading this book unless you, too, wanted to make a success of your career as a hypnotist. You, too, will revel in the personal and financial rewards that await.

Let’s get started.

**EXERCISE 1.1**

Put the book down and actually visualize the scene I just described. Think of how it feels to be a successful stage hypnotist. Imagine you are already there.

How do your friends and family feel about your success?

How do you feel when the audience is happy with your show?

What will you do with the financial rewards?

How does it personally feel to be successful?
You are going to get all this and more by reading *The Ronning Guide to Modern Stage Hypnosis*.

If you start this book I urge you to finish it. Make sure you complete the exercises and work to the best of your abilities.

I love being a stage hypnotist. I think you will, too. I want you to be doing shows that will not only thrill your audiences, but will be the best show they have ever experienced.

*The Ronning Guide to Modern Stage Hypnosis* is designed to help you get started quickly as a stage hypnotist; understand yourself better; understand others; improve your life; increase your personal productivity; and rapidly alter your financial status.

**FOR THE DOUBTERS**

At this point, most of you are on board and can’t wait to get started. But I suspect that there may still be a few who are wondering if this book will really get them on the road to success. I know this because I always see “Doubting Thomases” at the beginning of my training sessions. For those skeptics, and for the rest of my curious readers, take a look at the tools and information covered in this book. Go through the book, do the exercises, check out our website, listen to the success stories, then make a decision. I guarantee that this book will provide a realistic plan for success as a stage hypnotist.

And just to give you a little extra and to be sure you are motivated, I have also invited some wonderful guest experts to share their stories and success tips. That will come later in the book and I think you will find them very inspirational and valuable.

As you move forward on this journey, work hard and respect the stage hypnosis field. There are many who have walked before
us and it is our job to tend to the path and keep it sparkling for future generations.

**LEARN TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**

We were crammed into a room too small for the size of this corporate audience. I was just getting started with the pretalk when the power went out. No music, no lights, no microphone.

I made a few jokes and kept rolling on with the show, albeit without the benefit of the microphone—no easy feat with this group of some 240 people. By the end of the pretalk the power was back on and I called for volunteers. During the induction the power went out again.

I immediately started to incorporate that into the induction phase of the show and started to project my voice so as to be heard. Wendy went to find the banquet manager again. But by the time I got to the end of the induction, the power was back on and we were well into the show.

As I started the first skit, the power went dead again. Wendy went to find the banquet manager. Again, by the end of the skit the power was back on.

This situation continued throughout the entire first half of the show. By then it was apparent the situation was going to continue, the power finally stayed off through the entire end of the show.

Afterwards the audience was appreciative. They commented on how we soldiered on. While I don’t think the
show was one of our best, it was a clear winner for those in attendance and great training for us in overcoming adversity.

At some point in your career the microphone will go dead, the lights will go dark, and things will malfunction. The best advice I can give is to keep smiling and act like you have been through this situation a thousand times.

Do enough shows and all kinds of “adversity training” will make its way into your performances. Count on it!

**EXERCISE 1.2**

Consider the many reasons you are reading this book and choose the five most important reasons you want to learn stage hypnosis. Focusing on these goals will increase your chances of success and bring benefits to you and your business.

1. _____________________________
2. _____________________________
3. _____________________________
4. _____________________________
5. _____________________________

If you have not done the exercise then go back, do it now. Don’t move on until you have done it. When you are finished, I will reward you with…
THE TOP FIVE REASONS HYPNOTISTS FAIL TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

This is a good place to start. If you can avoid these pitfalls, you will be further along than most! Here are the reasons that most stage hypnotists don’t succeed.

1. NO REAL HYPNOSIS EDUCATION OR POOR HYPNOSIS EDUCATION.

Knowledge is power and a key factor in any successful enterprise. It can provide a clear map to your desired goals. Unfortunately, many times people get an outdated map and no matter how hard they work, how far they travel, they end up at the wrong destination.

I see it time and time again: someone will want to learn about hypnosis or the entertainment business and they find someone who failed. Or worse, they drop in on some Internet forum and seek advice from a total stranger who has absolutely no qualifications.

In circumstances like this, at best, you are going to get advice on how to fail, and, at worst, the information will be personally or financially disastrous. Do some homework. Find experts who have had success in this business, who will help you succeed.

2. NO COMMITMENT TO CONTINUAL EDUCATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

Success is not an event, it is a process. It takes a lot of work, a lot of effort and continuous improvement. The moment you start to coast you will slide backwards. Commit right now to continually educating yourself with books and training. It will pay off in big dividends and help keep you ahead of the pack.
Everyday I still spend time learning. As I write this book, I am at a vacation home on a golf course, surrounded by books and videos to keep me inspired, to help my students, to keep my edge.

Years ago I remember traveling to Albuquerque, New Mexico. We were performing at schools during the day and at a comedy club at night. The first night we got to town our vehicle was broken into and everything was stolen. I don’t recall if I set the alarm on the vehicle or not, but everything was gone—wardrobe, sound system, computer, printer…everything.

You know what they stole that hurt the most?

It was a huge gym bag packed with educational resources. In that bag I probably had 200 books and dozens of VHS tapes. Many were irreplaceable. What made it even worse was that I knew that as soon as the thieves opened it up and saw what was inside, they would simply throw it all away. I’m sure to them that gym bag and its contents were worthless. To me they were priceless.

3. NOT TAKING THE TROUBLE TO CREATE YOUR OWN TRADEMARK SHOW OR PERSONA.

I could teach you hypnosis by handing you my act. I could give you my script word by word. It would be easy for you, and far easier for me to teach you this business that way, but ultimately it would be the kiss of death for you.

You see, you need to develop your own character. Think of this: if I handed you a popular comedian’s act, or a late night television host’s monologue, and you got up to perform it, how do you think the audience would respond?

That’s right, it would bomb.

You have to be you when you get on stage. You cannot be someone else.
Of course this is more difficult, but it is ultimately the only path. Being someone else, doing someone else’s show, will not help you. In fact, it will hurt you and never allow you to flourish as a financially successful entertainer.

4. LACK OF MARKETING KNOWLEDGE.

The majority of stage hypnotists who fail lack a marketing plan. They are not successful booking shows.

You can have the best show in the world but if you can't book it, what does it matter? Stage hypnosis is show business. You may have the “show,” but without a paying venue, you do not have the “business.” I believe the “business” part is more important that the “show” part. Not that you want to do a poor show, but the show will never flourish without bookings, and the bookings will never come without marketing. You need to know marketing, how to sell your business and be able to execute it.

This book will teach you how to get up and running with as many shows as you desire in just twenty-one days. These shows will be in an unsophisticated market, which is ideal when you are starting out, in venues that have started many careers. They are instead designed to provide a critical training ground to get you off to a fast start so that you can move to the next level.

Fifth and finally, the biggest mistake...

5. TRYING TO SERVE MANY MASTERS.

This is also my newest rule. I added this about six years ago because I started to see people fail repeatedly even though they were studying hard, practicing, and rehearsing. The problem was they were studying too many people. Without the proper training
this can be harmful to your career by adding too much information, some of it contradictory and confusing.

I now advise studying just one mentor at a time; learn all you can from that person. And only then do you move on and do the same with others. If that takes two weeks, so be it; if it takes ten years, that’s fine too.

Those are my top five reasons I see people fail in this career. I know some of you may make those mistakes, despite my warnings and your best intentions. That’s all right. Don’t give up—come back to this book, study the five things to avoid, and start again. Success will come most quickly to those of you who follow the rules to the letter right from the start!

*Geoff heading into a corporate show set up in somewhere USA. Around the United States with one case and a little knowledge between my ears.*
WHAT IS HYPNOSIS?

I was a different kind of kid. In fact, as a child I was not interested in sports, cartoons, comic books, or the typical kid things. I was interested in the power of the mind. I was not out playing baseball or cops and robbers; I was reading *Think and Grow Rich* and *The Magic of Thinking Big*.

I was fascinated by all things possible with our minds.

I got lucky (a reoccurring theme in my life). We had a psychologist who lived on our block. He had the only swimming pool in our blue-collar town. So, not only did I get to swim in his pool but he also taught me a lot about the mind and hypnosis. I was fascinated by hypnosis I was instantly attracted to it. I was driven to find out all about it and to become an expert.

I remember in sixth grade I got in trouble for hypnotizing kids at camp. Later that same year, I got in trouble again for hypnotizing kids in the restroom. I had caught the hypnosis bug and it burns even brighter today than it did when I was twelve!
MISINFORMATION IS RAMPANT

Even after all of these years when you say the word hypnosis, many people conjure up an image of a creepy fellow swinging a watch in front of someone’s eyes and putting them into some kind of trance. Others have the idea that a hypnotist has the ability to take control of a person’s mind and make them do their bidding. TV shows and movies portray these erroneous views of hypnosis all the time. You will not be learning how to get someone to rob banks or carry out illegal activities or do sexual favors for you. I let others write those books…and they do.

HYPNOSIS DEFINED

Here is what I think is the best definition of hypnosis.

_The act of altering someone’s belief or reality through suggestion._

How simple is that?

I could make it much more difficult to grasp, use lots of ten-dollar words and dazzle you with a lot fancy footwork. But I’m here to teach you hypnosis, not improve my boxing skills. The bottom line is that hypnosis is a natural state of mind that each of us experiences every single day. Here are a few examples:

Have you ever found yourself engaged in a project that captured all your attention and time seemed to fly by? Have you ever tried to speak with somebody who was working furiously at a computer keyboard and you had trouble getting their attention? Have you ever been playing video games and all of a sudden realized your whole day was over? Have you ever found yourself driving and
realized that you had gone several miles without noticing your surroundings?

All of these examples are the natural trance state. In addition, some of those have natural trance phenomenon demonstrated as well.

**TRANCE PHENOMENON**

Trance phenomenon is a characteristic that is present during trance. For instance, time distortion is a trance phenomenon. So when the time goes by quickly, that is a natural trance phenomenon.

**Exercise 2.1**

Over the next several days, see if you can recognize the natural trance state, either in yourself or in others. You will be surprised to realize how many times you find yourself in this state.

Despite the knowledge that we all go into trance like states throughout the day, and awareness of hypnosis has been around since the dawn of mankind, some question the state of hypnosis. They wonder if there really is such a thing. This has been a raging debate among theologians, hypnotists, and medical experts. But, recent evidence using a PET scanner shows that the brain reacts in specific, measurable ways to hypnosis.

A subject’s brain wave activity was studied while they were listening to a specific audio sample; imagining they were hearing the audio but it was actually not playing; relaxing and imagining
they were hearing the audio; and while hypnotized and given suggestions that they were hearing the audio but it was not playing.

The results were astounding! The research revealed the region of the brain called the right anterior cingulate cortex was just as active while the volunteers were hypnotized as when they were actually listening to the audio sample. This was not the case when they simply imagined the audio or when they relaxed and imagined the audio sample.

In a nutshell, hypnosis had completely deceived the right anterior cingulate cortex area of the brain into registering the hallucinated audio as genuine.

That is the sort of stuff that gets me very excited! It makes me realize the power we are tapping into when we use hypnosis. If you would like to see more on this study visit: www.StageHypnosisCenter.com/study.html

**If you believe something to be true, is it?**

**THE TWO MINDS—CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS**

How can our brains get fooled into thinking something is real when, in fact, it is not? Here is the model I like to use to understand and explain it.

I’m not a doctor. This is just a model. The brain is probably the least understood organ in the body, it holds many mysteries and I’m not going to solve them in this book. But for our purposes, this model is quite valuable.

Although we all have just one brain, we all possess two minds: the conscious mind and the subconscious mind. It is important to understand the function of each of these so we can understand how hypnosis works.
Conscious Mind  vs.  Subconscious Mind

Logical, Analytical  
Sequential

Cognitive, Thinking  
Limited Focus

Directs outcomes  
Deliberate  
Waking

Intuitive  
Simultaneous

Feeling  
Habits

Expansive  
Runs bodily functions  
Active while sleeping and dreaming

Your conscious mind is your present or current awareness. For instance, in reading this, you are currently aware of the weight of the book in your hands and the words on the page. What you may not be aware of is the sounds of the traffic outside, the sounds of the air conditioner or heater, or the furniture surrounding you. There would be literally thousands of these “things” outside of your conscious awareness.

**Exercise 2.2**

Grab a friend and try this experiment. Both of you sit in the same place for two minutes, observing your surroundings. At the end of the two-minute period, write down the sounds, sights, and smells you can remember. Now, check your list against that of your friend’s. Are they identical? I doubt it! Why is this? Your conscious mind focused on different things. This is why when two people witness a crime, they remember very different details.
Can you imagine what your world would be like if you consciously noticed every sensation, every noise, every smell, every object, every color? It would be overwhelming. Your brain would be on complete overload. That is why the conscious mind can only hold onto limited information, or the information that you are currently focusing on.

According to seminal research by Princeton psychologist George A. Miller, the amount of information the conscious mind can hold is seven digits, plus or minus two. Think about this for a minute. Why do you think that phone numbers are seven digits long? Why do you think it is easier to remember a short list of grocery store items than it is a long list? It is because our conscious minds can only recall a limited amount of information.

Even if the list of information we are memorizing is the same, if we break the list into smaller segments, we stand a far better chance of remembering it. Consider your zip code plus four, your phone area code plus the number.

For more on this work by George Miller you can visit: www.StageHypnosisCenter.com/research.html

But if we are constantly bombarded by thousands of pieces of data where does the rest go? As I type this I’m consciously aware of you reading this book. But there is plenty of additional data that I’m processing. I’m aware my water bottle is to the left, the golf course is in front of me, the table I’m at is wood, the chair is supporting me fully, my skin feels the sensation of my socks and my feet are resting on carpet. My Mac is playing some nice music that is being delivered comfortably into my headphones. All of that data is being processed by my subconscious mind outside of my conscious awareness until I begin to become aware if it. It was there all the time, but not consciously in my awareness.
It is said our subconscious mind can take in 200 billion bits of information per second. Smarter people than I have come to that conclusion, and personally I have never counted. What is important is that you realize that if the conscious mind focuses on your current awareness, the subconscious mind processes everything else.

Imagine yourself in a cavernous conference room. Turn the lights off and pull the curtains so that it is dark. Turn on a single bright flashlight and shine it into one corner. Walk over to that corner and focus the light as tightly as possible. The corner would be lit by your light, but the rest of the room would be pitch black. The illuminated corner represents your conscious mind, while the rest of the darkened room represents your subconscious mind.

Your conscious mind is very limited as to what it experiences. Your subconscious mind is virtually unlimited.

---

**SOME PEOPLE WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND – SOME PEOPLE DON’T WANT TO**

About nine years ago at a terrific show with 300 kids in the audience, one of the parents approached a girl I had hypnotized and started to lead her out of the room.

I saw him taking her out and I decided to head them off in the back of the room just as they were about to the leave. As I was giving suggestions on stage, I managed to emerge (wake up) the girl, while still running the show. The parent took this child outside the room, put her on a couch with a cold cloth on her forehead.
After the show, the same parent wanted to talk to me. Initially he just wanted to engage me by “asking questions about hypnosis.”

As he talked he gradually began to express his religious opposition to hypnosis. I listened and politely referred him to the local library. He immediately grew very confrontational and stated that he didn’t approve of the mind control, saying that it was the work of the devil.

What do you do in this situation? Do you try to explain hypnosis? Do you try to educate them? Help them understand?

The best course of action is to listen to their complaints, maintain your composure, and thank them for their comments. While you may not see these types of people often, it is a good idea to be prepared to handle their concerns by not becoming engaged in some religious debate. You will not change their mind, and most of these folks are not interested in your views.

The subconscious takes it all in.

There are those who believe that everything we have ever experienced is locked away in our subconscious. I don’t know if that is true or not, but I do know I have done amazing things with individuals that have lost items. I have hypnotized them, “regressed” them, and recovered the memory that they could not recall consciously. It is truly amazing to be able to take someone that has no memory of where they hid something and take them right back to that moment in time and instantly recover the data. That is a topic for another day.
Another characteristic of the subconscious mind is that it is lazy! It likes routine. It does not like change. In fact, if you analyze our lives you will see that we are creatures of habit.

From the moment we get up to the moment we go to bed we operate mostly from the subconscious. Think about your morning routine, think about how you get to or from work, how you interact with others, answer the phone, and your evening routine. Our subconscious runs our life.

**THE GREAT DIVIDE BETWEEN THE CONSCIOUS AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND**

Between the conscious mind and the subconscious mind, there is a division called the critical factor. The critical factor will take what the conscious mind is thinking, and then seek approval from the subconscious mind to pass that message along. Sometimes it allows that message to be delivered, sometimes it does not.

Many say we develop our critical factor, or the division between the conscious and subconscious mind, at about age six. Up until that point in time we are learning things very rapidly. If you have ever observed children, you know how quickly they are able to pick up new information. This is because the critical factor is not fully developed. They are more fully open to all sorts of stimuli. As we age it becomes more important to exercise caution, to know the difference between right and wrong, hence critical factor becomes more discerning and developed.

Let me give you an example of how the critical factor operates.

For instance, in the case of a smoker, if the conscious mind says, “OK, I am going to quit smoking.” The critical factor will then turn to the subconscious mind and ask if that thought can enter.
As the subconscious mind is in charge of our habits, it is the subconscious mind’s decision. As intelligent as it would be to stop smoking, we also know the subconscious mind is lazy and fights change, so because of those characteristics the subconscious will decline the opportunity for that thought to enter.

Remember that the subconscious is “lazy” and it may even try to justify the decision with various excuses such as: “all my friends smoke,” “I need to smoke to reduce my stress,” and “It keeps me from being grouchy.” So it may prevent the “quit smoking” message.

With hypnosis we can by-pass the critical factor and give suggestions to the subconscious mind directly to change our habits, our beliefs, and our behavior. In essence, we can make the division disappear so our suggestions go straight into the subconscious mind. And what takes hold in our subconscious becomes our reality.

Here’s an example.

Let’s say you wanted to lose weight. Your “weight loss” message would be presented to the critical factor and it would ask your subconscious mind if that was acceptable. Your subconscious mind would take a deep breath and think: “In order to lose weight I will have to eat smaller portions, eat healthier meals, exercise regularly…”

Remembering that your subconscious is lazy, or has an aversion to change it will immediately tell your critical factor to reject the weight loss idea. We already know that what does not take hold in your subconscious will not become our reality. So we continue on our current path.

Hypnosis allows us to bypass the critical factor, allowing direct access to the subconscious mind, where we can instantly alter
reality, change personalities, and, for our purposes, create the best comedy hypnosis show in the world!

Now that you have a model of the mind and how hypnosis works, let’s introduce another important factor.

**BRAIN WAVE ACTIVITY**

The brain continually emits electronic signals called waves. It happens automatically. There are, however, four different wavelengths associated with various states. They are:

1. **Beta waves:** The normal waking consciousness state. As you read this book, you are in beta. Beta is a state where you are wide-awake and aware of your surroundings.
2. **Alpha waves:** A slower pattern, found when people relax, listen to music, or meditate.
3. **Theta waves:** Present just before and after you awaken from a deep sleep.
4. **Delta waves:** Deep sleep. Delta allows you to rejuvenate and dream.

According to some, Alpha and Theta waves can be present during hypnosis. Why would this be important? Because it clearly shows that hypnosis is not sleep.
THE FOUNDRATIONAL CORNERSTONE OF MY TRAINING

From this point forward, with every exercise, every page you turn, I want you to have two foundational thoughts at the forefront of your mind. These two concepts are the cornerstone of a successful stage hypnosis show. They are crucial to developing exceptional skills to hypnotize others.

FOUNDATIONAL THOUGHT #1: THE WORLD’S GREATEST SUBJECTS

Whenever you hypnotize anyone you must fully accept them as they are, as they present themselves on your stage. They are not flawed in any way. They are not too young or too old, too tall or too short, too weak or too strong. They are simply the subjects you are going to hypnotize at this time, the “world’s greatest subjects.”

You cannot allow any outside influence such as demographics, race, religion, politics, or gender interfere with your ability to hypnotize these subjects. Clear your mind. Accept them as they are. They are what they are: “the world’s greatest subjects.” If you learn to do that you will succeed.

FOUNDATIONAL THOUGHT #2: SUBJECTS WILL GIVE CONTINUAL FEEDBACK THAT THEY NEED TO ENTER A TRANCE STATE

Stage hypnosis is not something we do to someone. It is instead an unspoken agreement between the subject and the hypnotist who act together, cooperatively. Stage hypnosis is not some sort of power play, a demonstration of our ability to control someone else. The focus is on the entertaining the audience. And with entertainment
uppermost in our minds, the sooner we get the volunteer subjects responding to our suggestions the better.

When you combine these two foundational principles of having the world’s greatest subjects and knowing that they are providing us with continual feedback to enter a trance, you are on your way to producing a fantastic show.

Past practitioners of stage hypnosis considered it a numbers game: get enough people upon stage and you will find enough natural hypnotic subjects that will let you eliminate the rest.

In my opinion nothing could be further from the truth. Hypnosis is not a numbers game it is a game based on the skill of the hypnotist.

To perform at that level, you cannot see the stage volunteers as one collective body, you have to view them as separate and distinct individuals constantly giving you feedback, communicating with you so that you can give them what they need in order to by hypnotized.

Later on we will discuss how you will accomplish such things. But at this point, accept the idea that you are dealing with the world’s greatest hypnotic subjects, and they are going to be giving you continuous feedback so that you can bring them into the trance state with speed and grace.

Keep those foundational thoughts at the forefront of your mind throughout the rest of the book... and your entire career!

“The first person you hypnotize is yourself!”

— Geoff Ronning
SECTION II

ON WITH THE SHOW!
CHAPTER 3

KICK-STARTING A GREAT SHOW

THE PRETALK

HOW TO CREATE A POWERFUL CONNECTION WITH YOUR PARTICIPANTS

The show starts the minute you walk onstage. Too often, stage hypnotists believe the show starts once they get their volunteers into a hypnotic trance. Not true.

Your audience looks to you from the moment you put your foot on the stage. You need great volunteers from this audience. To do that, you need to develop immediate rapport with this audience so that some of them will want to become part of the show.

All of this happens during your pretalk. The pretalk is the conversation you have with the audience prior to getting volunteers up on stage to be hypnotized. The more prepared and polished the pretalk, the better the show. It sets the pace for the show. It gets the audience involved. It begins the all-important process of building trust between you and the audience. If you don’t gain the audience’s trust, you won’t get volunteers. If you don’t have volunteers, you don’t have a show!
The pretalk is like an “advertisement” for the show. Two things are happening in the pretalk: you are involving the audience in helping you find the best volunteers; and you are also making them aware of volunteers that will not work. The audience is making judgments about you, too. So, once again, the stronger your pretalk, the better the volunteers.

THE PROPER PRETALK

If you fail in the pretalk, you can count on a bad outcome. You’ll have trouble getting volunteers or they will not be very good subjects. Your induction could take longer, participants may not go into a deep trance state. The show will suffer, and your business will take a hit.

“THEN GET THE ---- OUT!”

Wendy and I are busy. We have the delightful problem of having more shows than we are able to schedule. Several years ago one of our clients wanted to book us. We were already booked that evening. But we were able to find someone else to take our place.

Following the show our replacement calls me up and tells me it was a “crap” audience. He could not get their attention during the pretalk and they would not listen to him and he finally told them to get the —— —— out!

I replied so how did you phrase it?

He responded, I asked them during my pretalk, “Who wanted to skip the show?” The replacement hypnotist
said most of the audience applauded, they did not want his show.

I grimaced. You never ask a question you don’t know the answer to and even worse, you never ask a question that you do know the answer to that puts you into a risky position.

He then asked who wants to see a show? He said very few people applauded.

I said, “OK and then what happened?” He said I told the ones that did not want to see the show to get the – – – – out!

I said so how did you phrase it? He said, like that. I responded, but what did you literally tell the audience?

Again he repeated: I told them to get the – – – – out if they did not want to see the show!

It finally hit me, he literally told a group of educated, white collar workers at a corporate event, to get the – – – – out of their own event!

Come Monday I spoke to our client. She confirmed that indeed that is exactly the way it happened. Needless to say she never hired us again. I don’t blame her. I made the terrible mistake of sending a person I had not seen to fill in for us. That was the first and only time I fell for the fancy website as a testimonial to the performer’s quality.

I won’t name him, it is not fair and he is still out there performing. I will say that with the information in this chapter on how to create the proper pretalk, he would have had a great show instead of a confrontation. It all happens during the pretalk.
RONNING’S SEVEN PRETALK RULES

1. RELAX THE AUDIENCE

If you can get the audience to like you, a huge obstacle has been surmounted. Laughter is one of the best ways to do that. It will lighten the mood, build trust, and help pave the way to a great show.

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

It is far easier and less intimidating to ask people to do things as a group than it is individually. The pretalk is a great way to encourage audience participation in your show. This can be accomplished through simple pretests, which we will discuss later. These pretests have a way of conditioning an audience into getting them in a frame of mind to cooperate more easily with the hypnotist, making them more compliant, and producing a better show when they are asked to do more complex routines.

3. DEMONSTRATE YOUR SKILLS

Use the pretalk to demonstrate your skills as a hypnotist and a performer. Impress your audience with your knowledge of hypnosis. Be careful not to treat this like a school lecture. Let them know that they are in the hands of a real pro!

4. EASE THEIR FEARS

Many people are uneasy or fear hypnosis because they have seen unethical hypnotists or too many B movies perpetuating myths. The pretalk is the perfect time to acknowledge those fears and myths and make sure your audience is clear that you are not
there to embarrass them or make them uncomfortable. (There may be some shows where “embarrassing” incidents are an appropriate part of the show, but that is previously an accepted premise of that type of show.)

Explain to the audience that it is impossible to get “stuck” in a hypnotic state. Give examples of hypnosis in everyday life, and explain that hypnosis is not an unnatural state of mind. Participation depends on volunteers. No one will be forced to participate.

5. **GET THEM EXCITED**

Before you ask for volunteers, get your audience excited to volunteer. Tell them it is a once in a lifetime opportunity available only for a chosen few who are eager and willing to have a unique experience. All of this builds expectancy within your audience. The idea is to build on this thrilling opportunity, making more people want to compete for the limited spots.

6. **MY SHOW, MY RULES**

You want to be able to weed out the bad volunteers from the good ones. If you do a “killer” pretalk, you’ll get all the volunteers you need. From that group you want to pick the best. Here are some rules you need to make clear:

- You only want sincere participants.
- You don’t want people who want to resist hypnosis.
- You must exercise control over your show from the beginning.
- You must avoid any distractions.
- You must make your volunteers comfortable and your instructions to them crystal clear.
7. Reasons to Volunteer

It’s always a good idea to give your audience a reason to participate. They may have a secret urge to perform, to be on stage, or to be hypnotized. Your job is to uncover those desires and exploit it for the benefit of the show. Some may simply love the applause after a routine is completed. Others may want the unique experience, the thrill of being hypnotized. And still others may want to know what hypnosis is all about from a first-hand perspective.

Two common mistakes some stage hypnotists make during the pretalk is being too serious and trying to educate the audience. Your audience wants to laugh and have fun. There may be an educational undercurrent in your presentation. Perhaps a number of the people in the audience will choose to seek hypnotherapy because of your show. But the main reason you are there is to make sure your audience is entertained. That’s the best advertisement you can have for your future success.

Pretests as Part of Your Pretalk

Pretests are done to demonstrate some sort of phenomenon that will contribute to the show. There are a number of theories about pretests, including not using them at all. But some stage hypnotists use them prior to calling for volunteers or shortly after they have assembled volunteers on stage. I recommend pretests be done before your volunteers are on stage, mostly because they are an ideal ice breaker, especially among audiences where you might expect some hesitancy. The pretest helps grab the audience’s attention and put them at ease and makes the volunteer process go more smoothly.
Doing the pretests with just on-stage participants can slow a show down. For those practicing modern stage hypnosis, a faster paced show is much more desirable by contemporary audiences. Therefore, I recommend that pretests be incorporated into your pretalk while you are explaining hypnosis and what happens when a person enters a state of hypnosis and how they respond to the power of suggestion. The pretests should be fun, focused on making people laugh, and marvel at the results of your skills.

Along with making the audience laugh and have fun, you are also accomplishing another very important goal: getting the audience to respond to your suggestions before they are even asked to come up on stage or, at the very least, to comply with your request for participation.

Based on the audience’s response, I typically do one or two pretests prior to inviting participants on stage. While there are many pretests available to you, I have my favorites and encourage you to find the ones that you feel comfortable with and you believe that are most effective for your show. They can be an important part of the show. Keep them fast, fun and exciting and your audience will love them.

Here are two of the most popular pretests.

**MAGNETIC FINGERTIPS**

Have the audience interlace their fingers. Push their palms together. Tell them to imagine their palms are glued together, impossible to separate. Now have them extend their forefingers.
and then separate them by an inch or an inch and a half. Tell them to imagine that there are tiny magnets in the tips of those fingers, magnets that are drawing their fingertips together. When their fingertips touch, have them drop their hands in their lap.

There are really two ways to give this pretest, the first and most popular is to say the fingertips came together due to the power of suggestion. There is nothing wrong with that, but I don’t prefer that method. I like to tell the audience that it happened due to the natural constriction of the muscles or the tendons in their hands and that it happens automatically if they are following my instructions. I emphasize that it will be the same way on stage, the hypnosis will happen automatically when I put the right words in the right place and the subjects follow my directions. It has to happen, just like your fingertips have to come together if you are following my directions.

If I tell the audience what is actually happening, that there is no hypnosis going on, am I losing out on the benefit of the pretest? I don’t think so. In fact, I always assume my audience is intelligent and can handle the truth. I do not like to mislead them. By being honest and open with them the entire show, you build trust and a greater rapport.

**LIGHT HAND-HEAVY HAND**

Have the audience put their arms directly out in front of them palms down. Take a deep breath and allow their eyes to close. Tell them to turn there left hand palm up; imagine a heavy book on that hand. Have them “feel” the weight of the book getting heavier and heavier, their arm getting weaker and weaker and the weaker the left arm becomes the further down the left arm drops. Now have them imagine that a giant helium balloon is
attached to their right hand. The helium balloon is getting higher and higher. The higher the balloon goes, the higher it raises the right arm. Have them open their eyes and see how far apart their arms have become.

During the pretest, the more hypnotic language you can use, the better. Let’s take the light hand-heavy hand example. You might say:

“I would like you to put your arms out in front of you, and as you do, take in a deep breath. As you exhale this allows your eyes to close and you will feel very relaxed. Now, place your left hand palm up. In your left hand you will feel a heavy book pressing down on your hand. You feel the weight forcing your left hand down. The further down your left hand drops, the better it feels. Your right hand is now attached to a helium balloon and it begins to feel weightless. You feel your right hand floating higher and higher. The more they separate, the better you feel and the more confident you become.”

If you want to hear exactly how I present these pretests and the rate and speed with which I deliver them, visit www.StageHypnosisCenter.com/pretests.html. By listening to them it will give you insight into the proper pacing and timing of successful pretests.

When you use a pretest in your show, I suggest that you pick just one. The only time I use two is if I have a really reluctant or challenging audience. I want to respond to the audience that is in front of me. I want it to be as spontaneous as possible. But as a general rule, I’m looking to get the laughs and volunteers on stage as fast as possible.
KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE, PLAN YOUR PRETALK

Not every market has the same concerns. For instance, when you are entertaining a group of friends, or those that really know one another, you can get through the pretalk pretty quickly. They are there to have fun and laugh at their friends and want to get right to the meat of the show.

In a comedy club, there is no need to eliminate fear, or to get them to relax. Trust me. Those in a comedy club are about as relaxed as anyone can get. Just ask the bartender!

Fear is usually not a problem at shows at schools. Students want to do crazy stuff. They will beg you to hypnotize them!

Fraternal organizations and corporate environments tend to be an older and more conservative crowd. They will most likely need all of the pretalk elements. We as live performers should be creating the best show for the audience at that moment in time, understanding the rules but adjusting the presentation for each group.

Not every show will require that we cover each rule. The following chart will help you determine which parts of a pretalk will be needed for each type of environment. Keep in mind that there are always exceptions to the rule, so it is up to you to know your audience and make decisions based on that knowledge.

On my planet, the more we can cut out and the faster we can get people on stage, the better the show. All my audiences just want to laugh, and they will laugh a lot harder at their friends and family than I.

Here is the chart with the rules for each market.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Relax Audience 1</th>
<th>Audience Participation 2</th>
<th>Demonstrate Skill 3</th>
<th>Ease Fears 4</th>
<th>Get Excited 5</th>
<th>Your Rules 6</th>
<th>Reasons to Volunteer 7</th>
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ADVANCED PRETALK SUCCESS

If you want the best show possible, then one of the first things to do is to develop the strongest pretalk possible. Let’s learn about the advanced tools we can apply to create a successful show.

DEVELOPING RAPPORT

Rapport is never about manipulation. It’s about getting in sync with someone.

As successful stage hypnotists we must live in our subject’s reality. We don’t try to change their beliefs; we accept them. In this way we meet people on their level and on their level is the only place you can create an environment for rapport. Some may say this is manipulation. I disagree. This is what I call communicating fully with others.

Think of it this way, if you were talking to someone that did not have sight would you use words to draw a mental picture? Certainly you would. This is what we mean by developing rapport, communicating with others on their level. It is how the stage hypnotist gets the message across in clear, concise terms.

The benefits of building rapport with your audience will increase their trust in you, create a feeling of security, and open up more avenues for full communication.

Hold on now because we are going to start to pick up the pace. It is imperative that you participate and learn these techniques.

THREE RAPPORT TOOLS

1. Mirroring

Mirroring is a technique that allows you to enter another person’s world and create an environment that makes them feel comfortable.
Technically, what this means is that we copy and exhibit a significant percentage of the traits of the person we are mirroring.

To understand how powerful this strategy is, imagine you are in a foreign country and you don’t speak the language. Out of the blue you see a person you recognize from your neighborhood back home. Even if you have never talked to him, what do you think you would do? In most cases, you would probably run up and greet them. You share a common bond. And that familiarity is something people respond to and feel secure about. A rapport can develop with total strangers.

What character traits can we mirror of others? Breathing, posture, gestures, blinking, the voice, the way we walk, and other body movements. Remember, being a good hypnotist is about being a master observer!

Now, as we mirror, we do so in such a way that the person we are mirroring does not notice it. If they notice it, you are not doing it correctly. You want them to experience it on a subconscious level, to feel that “security” of someone being like them, but not consciously realizing you are orchestrating it. Don’t attempt to understand this on a purely intellectual level. Give it some thought. Here is another great rapport tool.

2. Cross Matching

Matching a behavior with a different behavior. Matching the rate of a head nod with a foot movement, for instance, would be a cross matching activity. Matching the rate of breathing with the rate of your voice is another cross match. Perhaps you simply cannot match the movement of another for whatever reason; you can always use cross matching.

What can you cross match? Once again, everything you can observe. The key is for the person to feel it on a subconscious
level, but not be consciously aware of it. You don’t need to be sitting right next to the person. You could be several feet or even across an airport terminal. Try it, it is an amazing tool. Here’s the third tool.

3. **Mismatching:**

It is just as you may suppose, you mismatch your subject’s behavior and intentionally break the relationship or rapport. This one is easy, if we know how to create rapport, we can probably surmise how to break it, reversing what we would do to create it.

For instance, if they lean back we move forward. If they talk fast, we talk slow. If they speak soft, we get loud. This will allow us to intentionally break rapport. Why would we want to break rapport during a show, there are numerous reasons including: you may want people to feel uncomfortable, you may want to end a conversation, or you may want to give a signal that you are dissatisfied with the subject. Sometimes the best way to gain control is to break rapport.

Here is a quick example of when this would be valuable. You have just called for volunteers, they are all seated for your show and you are just about to begin your induction when one of your volunteers begins to have a conversation with their neighbor. By intentionally breaking rapport with them you will deliver a very strong message to the entire group of what it is you are demanding as a show participant. You will immediately alter the behavior of the individual that is talking.

These rapport skills work with the entire audience as well as the individual volunteers. These skills allow you to meet your audience where they are. If they are excited and you mirror their excited
movements, they will feel like you know them and understand them. If they are reserved and professional, you should meet them at that level.

Once again, people identify with people who exhibit behaviors similar to their own. You must enter their reality, then take them to where you want them to go. You cannot force them to your location.

When people take my live training courses they are oftentimes amazed at how powerful these strategies are and how much impact they can immediately have in their life. In my live training classes, we have had attendees procure free meals, free show tickets, free haircuts, taxi rides, and even a back massage all by using these “rapport” tools—with total strangers.

We are not learning rapport techniques to simply get freebies. But, I think, it is a good indication of what people are willing to do for you when they like you or develop a rapport with you. And if they do those things then obviously they are willing to come up and be successful participants in your show and pay you to entertain them again and again.
To better understand the use of rapport tools, do the following exercise, then work to refine these techniques. They are truly magical.

**Exercise 3.2**

Once again, find a friend for this exercise. Sit across from them and have a talk. Consciously notice what they are doing with their arms, hands, legs, and breathing. Notice if they are tapping, bouncing, or swaying. Then start to use your rapport tools. If you do this correctly, the other person won’t even know it is going on!

Once you have rapport, go ahead and intentionally break it with the mismatching tool we learned. Notice what happens, how it feels to have the connection broken. Then practice getting rapport back as fast as possible. If you were to just apply the previous skills in your stage hypnosis work you would be ahead of a large percentage of stage hypnotists already.

**Language Skills**

Let’s move on to language skills. The words we choose in our stage performance have massive impact on others. They can work for or against us. Hypnotic language is one of the most fascinating areas of hypnosis.

1. **Pacing Statements**

   Pacing statements are statements that are undeniable truths. They are what many in sales call a “yes set.” They are important
because whenever we are communicating with someone there are lots of things going on. We are constantly evaluating and separating fact from fiction.

If I want to be fully communicating with you, and I want you to fully accept what is I am saying, it is best to use pacing statements.

Here are some examples of pacing statements: Your eyes are open, you are reading this book, you see the words on the page, and the words form sentences. Notice that these are all undeniable truths. Assuming we have not published this book in Braille or that the book has not been modified to another format. Pacing statements are never about judgments, they are only about facts.

Here are examples for incorrect vs. correct pacing statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorrect</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfortably seated</td>
<td>Sitting in a chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidently poised</td>
<td>Standing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Not moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying water</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember, if it is a judgment, it is not a pacing statement. It must be an undeniable truth. Sure I may look at you and may come to the conclusion that you are comfortably seated, but what I may not factor in is the fact you twisted your ankle, you have a fever, or this is the anniversary of your dog’s death.

By utilizing only pacing statements, I can speak to you and never be incorrect. That is very important because as you read this, you see letters on the page. The letters on the page form the words. The words form sentences and you are starting to realize how much you are really learning and absorbing. And what would the field be without …
2. Leading Statements

Leading statements direct a person to where we want them to go. Let me give you a quick example:

As you read this, you see letters on the page. The letters on the page form the words. The words form sentences and you are starting to realize how much you are really learning and absorbing.

Look familiar? Sure. Repetition is a key of learning.

Let’s look at the above example and let me break down the structure so you understand what are the leading and the pacing statements and how they interact:

As you read this, you see letters on the page (Pacing);
The letters on the page form the words (Pacing);
The words form sentences (Pacing);
You are starting to realize how much you are really learning and absorbing (Leading).

You see if I just started out telling you that you are getting more excited, you could likely reject my idea. But by starting with three pacing statements, your mind analyzes each of those statements, and goes the path of least resistance on the final statement.

It looks like this:

My Pacing Statement:
As you read this, you see letters on the page.

Your Response:
True

My Pacing Statement:
The letters on the page form the words.
Your Response:
True

My Pacing Statement:
The words form sentences.

Your Response:
True

My Leading Statement:
You are starting to realize how much you are really learning and absorbing.

Your Response:
What the heck…OK. He was honest before he must be telling the truth.
And you accept the statement, which is obviously correct.
Initially, for every three pacing statements you should have one leading statement. Eventually, as you are doing the induction you can change that ratio to one for one.
Now let's understand the power of what we call transitional words.
The use of transition words is very important. They are used to connect leading and pacing statements. These are listed from the weakest to the strongest: and, as, while, when, because, makes, demands, and requires.
The more we ask of the participant, the more commitment on their part, the stronger the transitional word needed.
Weak Example: “Your hand is resting on your thigh and you become more and more relaxed.”
Stronger Example: “As your hand is resting on your thigh that makes you become more and more relaxed.”
Whenever you are using any pacing and leading statements to hypnotize others on stage, use the strongest transitions possible.

How do you know which is appropriate for that time? Shoot for the highest commitment possible. If you have someone that is one-hundred percent with you and going great, increase the power of the transition words. If you have someone that requires a little bit of extra effort, reduce the level of commitment so that you can keep bringing them along.

3. PRESUPPOSITIONS

This is when you presuppose an event or an outcome. An example would be: “Whenever you are using any pacing and leading statements to hypnotize others on stage, use the strongest transitions possible.” The presupposition is that you are going to have people on stage and that you will hypnotize them.

Presuppositions are always a stronger way to phrase things if you want them to be accepted without conscious consideration. In fact, earlier today I was having a conversation with a friend and I told him, I have the smartest dog on the block. Literally, I believe that.

Really think about this, do you think I personally have the smartest dog on the block or do you think I’m biased? Perhaps that is not the most important thing today, but what is important is do you agree with me? Do you think I have the smartest dog on the block?

Oh heck, it really does not matter because this is just another example to help you understand this concept. You see I asked you to consider the intelligence of my dog, you probably thought one of the following:
A. His dog is probably as smart as any other dog;
B. Geoff is biased because he loves his dog;
C. Any dog with Geoff could not be that sharp;
D. Who cares how smart your dog is, get back to the topic!

What you probably did not consider is: do I have a dog or not! You see I used a presupposition to get you to accept I have a dog without conscious consideration. The actual fact of my dog's intelligence did not matter to me. I did not care about how smart you decided my dog was. My communication was designed to get you to accept the premise I have a dog.

Which I don’t.

Now at our live training don’t get upset with me if I use a different example. Don’t be surprised if you start to use these presuppositions yourself without conscious awareness, especially during your first show. It is amazing how quickly you will start to pop them in, without warning.

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**HURRICAN Warnings AND Your PREtalk ELEMENTS!**

We left Washington at about 11p.m., following a show. We were expected the next day in Russellville, Arkansas, and the following night in Seattle. We arrived at the Little Rock airport at about 6:30 a.m. and headed for our hotel in Russellville. During the early afternoon the weather started rolling in and the town was braced for a possible tornado. I figured it was a common warning but the locals were nervous. And when the locals are worried, that is a bad sign.
Wendy decided she wanted a little wine and a drink sounded good to me. So out we headed.

Unfortunately, we were in a dry county. Our short trip to the store took us to the next county over. As the day wore on, the tornado warnings got more serious. The client called us and told us to be prepared to cancel.

We arrived at the venue and hoped liked crazy we would not die on stage, literally. (Figuratively is fine, I have done that numerous times.)

The audience was tiny as most people had stayed home because of the storm. It took everything in me to get volunteers on stage that night. We did the show, the client was happy, and we ended up toasting our evening with something stronger than apple juice.

We have not been back to Russellville since, that dry county stuff is a killer.

**THE GEOFFREY RONNING PRETALK FRAMEWORK**

We already realize that spontaneity gives us the freedom to work at our highest levels and reach the specific audience we encounter right in front of us. For that reason we should respond in the moment.

The following framework is from the pretalk I use and includes explanations of what is being accomplished in the process.
www.StageHypnosisCenter.com