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An Interview With

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Michael Hathaway, BCH, CI, OB

JH: Michael, next year will mark your 30th year with the NGH. how did you first become interested in hypnotism all those years ago?

MH: My first exposure to hypnosis occurred when I was hired to play piano for a stage hypnotist doing a show in a local club. At that time, about 1980, I can remember sitting at a table in a dimly lit dining room talking with a hypnotist before the show started, and he told me the story of his first experience. He accidentally hypnotized his grade school teacher in an after-school meeting. His soft voice induced a trance, the teacher suddenly put her head on the table and went to sleep, and he couldn't wake her up. It took a local doctor to explain to the young man what happened. To tell you the truth, looking back at it, I wonder if he was telling me that story in an attempt to hypnotize me to become part of the show. Suddenly, the room began to spin and I just pulled myself right out of it, and said to myself, "I've got to find out more about this hypnosis!" A day or so later, I talked to the psychologist at the high school where I was teaching, Dr. Don Orscillo, who used to hang out in the music department. He offered to loan me the books he had studied in college, and after that I was hooked. I read everything I could find on hypnosis. Incidentally, for New England readers, the name Don Orscillo may sound familiar. His son, Don Jr., used to practice calling baseball games in his mind while he was in elementary school, and he eventually became the Voice of the Boston Red Sox.

JH: How did you go on to train in the field?



MH: I spent the first ten years self-taught, as a lot of the older hypnotist did at that time, and it was an advertisement I received from Richard Harte that brought me to the National Guild of Hypnotist's Train the Trainer certification course, in 1993.

JH: And how did you career as a hypnotist evolve?

MH: I have a Bachelor of Music Degree from the Boston Conservatory of Music, and I taught music for 30 years in Conway, New Hampshire.

I began doing hypnosis demonstrations in the mid-1980s, and actually started working with people for habit change about the same time. After my NGH certification, I began planning a career change. I bought a building next door to my house in 1992 for an office, and opened a part-time practice in 1993. In 1994, I ended my teaching career and opened the office full time. For several years I did a lot of stage hypnosis throughout upper New England and as far south as Pennsylvania for high school graduation parties, etc. In 2001, I

was contracted by an agent for the *The Everything Book* series to write a book called *The Everything Hypnosis Book*, which led to other writing opportunities, including *An Idiot's Guide to Past Life Regression*, *The Everything Psychic Book*, and *The Everything Lucid Dreaming Book*. I have also self-published seven books. Plus, I wrote and produced nine royalty free compositions for hypnotists to use as background music or for creating hypnosis recordings. In 2007, I took a workshop at the NGH convention led by Gerald Kein on podcasting and since that time have done a daily podcast called "Message from the Mountain," connecting nature to spirituality using NLP storytelling techniques. I have done over 5000 recordings, posting a picture and a description with each.

My specialty is Past Life Regression. I have a certification from the International Board of Regression Therapy (I.B.R.T.) and get most of my referrals from them. I am very interested in neurolinguistics, also, and how it can be used to help facilitate trances.

Much of the work I do with clients I call "conversational hypnosis," and through the use of NLP techniques create a recording of approximately five minutes that I email to their phone with the recommendation that they listen to it once a day for three weeks (or I can make a tape or CD) to help them reroute a thought process.

I'm currently in practice part time. The office was closed for a year due to Covid, but is now cautiously open. My geographic location has a sparse

population, so most of my clients come from a distance. Due to the stress of the pandemic and the importance of nature, I changed the name of my practice from the White Mountain Hypnosis Center to the White Mountain Reflection Center. We have over three miles of hiking trails, a labyrinth, enchanted pathway, and peace garden open to the public on 150 acres adjacent to the Center in Madison, New Hampshire.

JH: Michael, what benefits do you feel you've personally received from being a hypnotist?

MH: The benefits to me are numerous, starting with using hypnosis after being involved in an accident (I was hit by an auto while walking across a street) in 1989. Lying in the middle of the street, knowing that I was seriously hurt, I just entered a light trance and then used hypnosis concepts to help facilitate healing and recovery over the next couple of years. I also have used self-hypnosis for weight control, eye surgery, and positive thinking.

JH: What are the biggest problems you've encountered along the way?

MH: A lot of people still do not understand what hypnosis really is. Also, there is a lot more competition now from other self-help resources for habit change. I have been fortunate that my state of New Hampshire has a positive relationship with hypnotists and other therapists. I am also fortunate to have the NGH headquarters in New Hampshire, and Dr. Damon has put a lot of time and effort into cultivating a good working relationship with the State Legislature.

JH: What advice would you give to a newcomer just getting started?

MH: Be aware of the level of your abilities. Don't try to do something you are not qualified to do. Don't hesitate to ask an experienced hypnotist or contact the Guild for advice.

Fortunately, there are a lot more resources available now than there used to be when I was starting, and the NGH is an excellent way to get information.

JH: And what would you suggest the same person do for the best chance at success?

MH: Does your area offer adult education courses, such as stress reduction or positive thinking? One of the ways in which I helped rebrand myself after being an educator was to offer adult education courses at the school. Take your message to the public by speaking, demonstrating, advertising (within reason), radio or television or newspaper. Networking is a great way to help connect people to potential clients. Donate a free hypnosis session to a charity auction. Plus, consider doing a podcast and develop a following. I always recommend that when a person is thinking about changing careers, they look at the resources they have already developed through past careers. If one is young, I would consider education, possibly using hypnosis as an adjunct to psychology, or medical work, or social work, or even athletics.

The income I receive from hypnosis comes from different sources – private clients, group hypnosis, stage hypnosis, and publishing.

JH: What do you think individual practitioners can do to help us as a separate and distinct profession?

MH: The first thing to do is to develop an ethical positive practice that helps attract people to their services – make their presence known to the general public through speaking engagements or demonstrations.

JH: You've been in the profession for quite some time. What changes have you seen over the years?

MH: The last 30 years I have seen hypnosis go through several different

changes. When I first began practice, there was a lot of interest in the metaphysical, and then there was an effort when psychiatrists began to push back against the hypnotists for fringing on their practice, and thanks to the Union and the NGH, that has all been balanced out, creating an awareness of practicing within the scope of hypnosis training. Today, the stress levels are so high in many people throughout the world that it is really “all hands on deck” working together.

JH: What do you see as the future of hypnosis in the United States?

MH: Personally, for myself and I believe for everyone, the knowledge of self-hypnosis, as well as working with certified hypnotists, is essential. I especially feel the need for this in education with neurolinguistic concepts, as I, for one, did not understand my own thinking processes until I studied it. I believe that it won't be long before there will be programs developed in public education to help students understand their natural abilities and how to use them to develop skills and make positive contributions to life in general.

JH: In closing, I know you've been to so many of our conventions, regularly as a presenter – I look forward to seeing you there. What are your general thoughts about the convention?

MH: I believe I've attended 27 of them, the 2020 virtual convention would make 28. I like the opportunity to connect with other hypnotists from around the world that I only see at the convention. ▼