

PLR

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I spent a Saturday afternoon at a seminar on Hypnosis and Past Life Regression. Quick summary? Wild.

Past Life Regression -- go back and experience events from past lives -- a pretty wild thought, isn't it? So, did I experience "past lives?" Don't know. Did I experience some very intense things? Most definitely!

The Process

As described and experienced, the process for PLR is on the surface fairly simple. First, establish an adequate depth of hypnotic trance. Once you've established that hypnotic trance, have the subject envision a doorway, labeled "Time," leading to an infinite corridor of doors, each door going to a different point in time. Choose a door, open it, and step through. Highly simplified directions -- there was more to it than that, but not a whole lot more.

The facilitator plays a key role in PLR. Through questioning, open-ended questioning, the facilitator helps the subject pick up sensations, feelings, kinesthetics, sometimes images, and helps the subject build up the image. It's a slow process. Answers and details don't often pop out quickly. Some times they do. Mostly it's a feeling rather than thinking process -- a recall of emotional, tactile, sensory nature. The subject becomes immersed as the details multiply.

It's important that the facilitator remain very open minded -- don't deny what the subject is experiencing, and don't try interpreting it on the spot. Lead it, tease out detail, and help it go where it wants to go.

There are various approaches to start with, or to use when detail starts petering out -- asking what kind of place is it (without leading, at least initially), asking about temperature. You can also go by orientation, from the bottom up -- what do you feel under your feet. You can move to a different time, later on, or go to a different door. When going to a different door, it's good to ask the subject if they want to go on, or if this is enough. For the subject, this work can be intense, and draining.

We had a demonstration of inducing trance using the progressive relaxation method, followed by one or more deepening techniques. I was the victim. Now I've been told I'm a good trance subject. I still take that with a fairly large grain of salt, but not with as much doubt as I had before Saturday. I understand the importance of

Past Life Regression

obtaining subconscious agreement with the subject. Part of this is assuming a positive outcome, and getting the subject to assume a positive outcome. All hypnosis is self-hypnosis, after all. When someone tells me I'm a good trance subject, the analytical part of me immediately asks, "Are you saying that because you believe it's true, or because you want me to believe it's true?" Call it an analytical hang-up, or a self-doubt hang-up - whatever it is, it's there in me. (The next week, as we started another session, I asked David about this -- "Are you saying that because you believe it's true, or because you want me to believe it's true?" His answer: "Yes, both.")

This induction was interesting, for a number of reasons. I was sitting up in a chair in front of people, with video cameras going, and lights in my face. I think the novelty of the situation helped keep me off balance. In any event, I'd have to say I achieved a light trance. After just that experience on Saturday, I'd have to say that as a trance subject, I can achieve light states of trance fairly easily, but find the deeper states at once very attractive and difficult to achieve.

We spent some time working with each other. I worked with another person, with one of the instructors present. As we were about to start, we were handed a one page write-up of the Dave Ellman induction. Thanks, but I'm going to go with what I know.

Working with the other student was interesting. I focused on his breathing, and watching his body respond, as well as remembered what it was like for me, and what seemed to work with me. I used a modified progressive relaxation approach as we'd been told, but I added to it, incorporating from what I read and remembered. I started out by getting agreement, and hammering on success from the beginning -- "you're going to go easily and rapidly into a wonderful relaxing trance, just as you've done so many times before." Some of the things I remembered from "Trance and Transformations" worked well -- "feeling the chair supporting you lets you go deeper and deeper." Or responding to slight body movement, "as your body moves to let you relax more, and go deeper."

After a while I noticed a shift in breathing pattern. I can't recall now from what to what, but I noticed a shift. During the process I also noticed postural shifts not inconsistent with deeper relaxation. It was interesting -- at some points, I felt as if I was hearing people talk to me, and I was repeating their words. I wanted to test for a limp arm, but remembered I hadn't asked permission to touch beforehand -- so I wouldn't do that.

One of the things I did in the deepener, counting back from twenty, was to set up a pace of counting, and then skip the occasional number. I got the feeling that what I said immediately after skipping a number, in that momentary confusion, would zip right past the gatekeeper of the conscious. That's interpreting from my experience anyway, and it seemed to work. I observed additional postural changes I interpreted as a deeper state.

I brought him up and we switched roles. He'd never done this before, and was somewhat confused. He remarked that a lot of what I'd said wasn't in what we'd heard

Past Life Regression

or on the sheet we'd been given. I told him I pulled up things that had worked for me, telling him to go with his gut.

So he started in, pretty much reading from the Dave Ellman sheet. He'd stumble, he'd reread words, and you know what? I think I hit a light trance anyway. I'm a better subject than I thought.

Afterwards, our instructor told us we'd both done well. Oh really? I would have liked better feedback.

We regathered for the PLR work. This started with a demonstration, with the instructor and the student I'd been with.

I watched the subject carefully during the process. It was very interesting. I saw some slight eye and eyebrow movement during the eye opening test, and twitches in the fingers. I saw shifts in breathing pattern, lowering of the shoulders, decrease in muscle tone of the forehead and eyebrows. At the start of the elevator deepener, his hands twitched a little. I liked the phrase "going beyond hesitation and doubt" -- that should be in every induction that's used on me! Subject's breathing rate increased momentarily and his right hand twitched when he got to the door marked "Time."

After choosing and entering a door, the instructor fished gently for detail. Subject's forehead wrinkled, eyebrows furrowed. Left hand finger motion. Some of his responses were immediate; some were delayed. Some questions were accompanied by larger body movements such as deep breaths and sighs.

The subject was in an uncomfortable spot, reporting pain, and fear. Muscle tone, breathing, facial expression all changed. One interesting technique is to tell the subject to let their intuition guide them, and when I snap my fingers, answer a question -- tell me what year it is. Snap. Subject says slowly one seven nine oh.

Subject was caught in a place of fear and pain. Can you say abreaction? He was nonresponsive to questions/suggestions such as, is it appropriate now to let go of the fear? Can you see yourself letting go of the fear? What steps needed to release the fear?

Instructor then went to a different approach -- frame it and distance it -- view it from a distance, further and further away, feel it dropping off, notice how it falls off and you return to calmness and relaxation, focus on peace of mind. That worked.

Instructor did more reframing, then brought him up. Subject was clearly still agitated from the experience. At one point, the subject said, "That was scary!" The instructor then looked out a window, and said, "Is it snowing? No, it's just the glare outside." Nice! Try to move way off the current track! The subject, though, wasn't budging -- responding by saying, "Shouldn't have picked that one." Subject and instructor talked about it a little more, relating back to something in an earlier session. We took a break.

Past Life Regression

After the break, it was time for another PLR demonstration, by the other instructor, who has done this hundreds of times. He spoke for a couple minutes on handling abreactions (he never used that word). Then he asked for a volunteer. I volunteered.

So there I was, sitting on that chair in the front of the room again, two video cameras going. Do I want to let my sub/unconscious loose in this kind of forum? On tape? Hell no! Well, better pick someplace safe to go then. So, I picked a safe place. Right.

The induction went well (because I'm a good subject, or because part of me was preoccupied?). When faced with the door, I'd chosen to go to the place where I see the rose (put link here). Instructor asked for details on the door. I couldn't "see" it, but I knew it was a plain wood door, in a painted metal frame, with a brass knob on the right. It was an old, heavy brass knob. I went in, and he led me exploring the place. I couldn't find the rose, but I did learn that the water was very healing. And I found my son, at age 12, standing on my left. I wanted to help him, to heal him. The feelings were really intense -- love, the desire to protect, to heal, to nurture. I cried a lot.

We moved to a different door. I chose the place I go when I cross the Veil -- that plateau. At times I could almost feel the hard dirt under my feet. I felt the energy in the clouds roiling overhead. At times I could feel the wand in my right hand, and once I saw the circle in the dirt around me. Under the instructor's prodding, I knew I was waiting for my wife. I could feel my left hand outstretched, waiting for her hand to be in mine. Strong feelings of love. More tears, and very strong emotions. If she didn't appear this time, she'd appear the next time. "Where does she come from?" the instructor asked. "Where do we all come from?" was my immediate reply. I can remember looking up as I said that, smiling, with tears running down my face.

In retrospect, I feel better about my ability to manage the process. The instructor was fishing for information -- is this a past life, or present? I thought it, but didn't say that this was future, parallel. So I can be selective. This also means I've got a long ways to go to really let go of things.

The instructor wanted quite a bit to fish for death, and passing on to a new form. I didn't know how to tell him that all I had to do was break the circle a certain way, and I'd be back on the other side again.

It's going to be interesting to watch the tape of this one. A couple times he asked me questions, and the answers popped out -- very Zen answers -- where do we all come from?

That one ended, and he brought me up. I was still in quite the emotional turmoil. I picked up my notebook and read "The Symbol" out loud, letting people know it was a

Past Life Regression

place I'd been before. I looked for the notes on when I first visited the plateau, but they weren't in the notebook -- which places them in 98 or earlier.

We broke up for individual work. I was still in turmoil, still stirred up. I worked with the same instructor in his office. Something told me to do this one seated. I sat in thunderbolt with a cushion between my heels and my bottom.

After the induction, and opening the door, where was I? It was hot, humid. Scents of flowers -- I was in a garden, walking with my wife, holding her hand. We have 6 kids. I'm a teacher/guide. The kids are at the house. We take this walk regularly. She's wearing a sari, and has a dot on her forehead. My skin, as is hers, is deep brown. We moved to a later time; I'm older. My skin, and hers, is more wrinkled. She has gray in her hair, but still such a loving smile. Our oldest son has 3 kids -- they're so noisy and alive! We've done well, raising our family. Deep emotions about our youngest daughter, concern about her. It's so hard to let go of them, and let them choose their own path. But they must choose their path, and only they can walk it. It's so hard to let go of them. Lots of tears. Then older yet, dying. My wife is dead already. Family and students are around me. I tell them not to cry -- I want to remind them it's all sensation, all impermanent, but it's over. I've died, and see White Tara before me. We end it there.

I'd spent over an hour sitting, without moving much. I bowed forward in thanks. My legs had gone to sleep, but I hadn't noticed -- they hadn't bothered me -- that's how deep I was.

This time I didn't try and flail my way out of whatever the state I was in, but took the approach of more swimming up through it gradually. That worked better.

Still, a few days later, it has its after effects. I experienced things I hadn't expected or anticipated. The magic question: what did I experience? Did I experience memories of (past/present/future/parallel) lives? I knew my son standing beside me at the pool was 12. But he's 8 now -- so that hasn't happened. Will it, symbolically or actually? What's the (purported) difference? As for the plateau, if he'd asked me to look at the sky, I'm sure I would have seen the two moons -- I've seen them before.

How about the last one? Was I recounting memories of an earlier life in India/Tibet in the 1860's?

Or, given a few starting seeds, can my imagination create a detailed self-consistent world? I find that explanation far more appealing.

One thing I'm sure of -- the experience shook me up. I went through a lot of very strong and complex emotions -- love, joy, loss, compassion. I think I'm also in better touch with some of those emotions, and possibly with the creative side. On Sunday I wrote a fable/fairy tale, about 4000 words, and read it to the kids. Don't know if my daughter liked it -- she listened. My son seemed to like it -- and he picked up on things in

Past Life Regression

the story -- I could watch his mind leap ahead at times. I read one line near the end, and he wiggled on the floor and exclaimed, "I thought so!"

So, what did I come away with? I have strong emotions. I'm a better trance subject than I thought. I experienced some very intense and unexpected things.

Did I experience "Past Lives," or did I experience the power of my imagination? It's subjective. Nobody knows what I was experiencing, sitting in that chair, or sitting on the floor in that room. I'm not even sure what I was experiencing! And if I'm not sure, how can someone else be?

What is "Real?"

What is real? What can we believe? All is sensation -- sensations which arise only to fall. It's all subjective. Others have pondered, argued, and fought over how we as a species take this subjective experience and forge it into the fiction called reality. I experience what I experience. You experience what you experience. I can't breathe through your nose. Your mileage may vary.

Would I do PLR again? Yes. It's an interesting experience.

Thanks again to the staff at Changeworks, for their skill and compassion -- once again, opening doors.

Namaste-

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