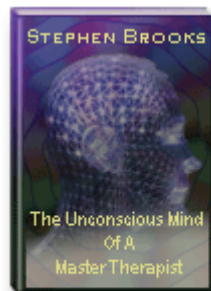


The Unconscious Mind Of A Master Therapist

An interview with Stephen Brooks under hypnosis

Stephen Brooks



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Introduction - An interview with Stephen Brooks under hypnosis

In June 2003 Brooks visited England for a few days to participate in a research project at Roehampton University. Brooks was hypnotised and interviewed to discover how he is able to work so effectively. What happened in this interview was much more than a therapist giving his opinions about the techniques of successful therapy. It was a deeply moving account of a committed therapist's pain, compassion and insightful approach to healing the world given directly from the non-conscious mind of a Master Therapist. It was so moving for the research participants that it had a profound affect on their lives thereafter.

The interviewer is Kerin Webb, a British Psychotherapist based in Bournemouth. Webb hypnotised Brooks and addressed selected questions to him. The questions were created by the research participants who were also present at the experiment. Brooks' answers were recorded on audio tape and also written on blackboards around the room by one of the participants.

As a way of introduction, one participant Jill Spencer, a British Psychotherapist, gave her account of what happened:

"I began to notice the stillness in the room almost as if everyone was holding their breath and then the whole room was filled with pure unconditional love. Light was all around and the love grew stronger and stronger. The words that came out of Stephen's mouth were not answers about techniques of therapy but spiritual messages for all of us. The light and love grew stronger and felt as if it was boring straight into my heart chakra, tearing down any walls of defence that I had put there. I could not escape from that vibration.

I then felt Buddha's pain, the distress almost as powerful as the love and his words to the Interviewer, ' Why cannot you love each other?' That was his pain. To see the cruelties, the hungers, the terrors, the indifference, the greed, the selfishness. I had to leave the room because by then I was in floods of tears with love and pain pouring into me.

On returning to the room when I had managed to compose myself I couldn't look at the board where the answers had been written because they were in brilliant light to bright to look at. It was an intense spiritual experience for me and changed something inside at a very deep level."

Jill Spencer

Stephen Brooks

Brooks has a lifetime's experience of using indirect hypnosis with severe problems and difficult patients. Inspired and encouraged by top American Psychiatrist Milton H Erickson, he was the first person to introduce Ericksonian Hypnosis into the UK in the mid 1970's. Since then, his own innovative indirect therapy techniques have had a major influence on the health professions both in the UK and Europe and have changed forever the perception of hypnosis and how it should be used within therapy.

He was founder of [British Hypnosis Research](#) (1979) and the British Society of Clinical and Medical Ericksonian Hypnosis (1995), both major training bodies for the caring professions. His two-year Diploma courses became the standard training for thousands of health professionals and over a period of 15 years he taught indirect hypnosis courses in over 27 major British hospitals. His Diploma courses also became the standard training for hypnotherapy associations and organisations in France, Belgium, Spain and Ireland. In 1991 he was awarded special acclaim when archive recordings of his work were preserved in the British National Sound Archives.

He specialised in innovative approaches to Indirect Hypnosis with an emphasis on demonstrations with real patients during his training courses, something that many trainers are still afraid to do. A common thread in Brooks' work is his humour, compassion and creative approach to therapy and his deep respect for the unique needs of the patient. He treats problems by spontaneously doing what is often most unexpected but always most appropriate for the patient at the time, quickly tailoring each therapy session to the patient. His enthusiasm is highly contagious and he has the great quality of being able to teach his complex refined skills in a dynamic and simple to learn form.

In the mid 1990's, at the height of his UK career, he decided to retire and settle in the mountain rainforests of Northern Thailand where he studied trance healing with monks and shamans for several years. He is now responsible for the design and teaching of the [British Hypnosis Research](#) online academic hypnosis courses and he runs the [British Hypnosis Research Summer School](#) in the UK and America each year.

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For further information about Stephen Brooks [click here](#)

Interview Transcript

The interviewer is Kerin Webb, a British Psychotherapist. Webb hypnotised Brooks and addressed selected questions to him. The questions were created by a small group of health professionals prior to the session who were also present at the research experiment. The session took place in June 2003 at Roehampton University London England.

The session starts after Webb has put Brooks into a profound hypnotic trance.

Interviewer: Do you prepare your mind in any way before the session starts?

Brooks: (nods his head and then pauses)

Interviewer: And can you tell us Stephen in ways we can understand?

Brooks: I go and have a shit

Interviewer: That's letting go isn't it?

Brooks: (pause)

Interviewer: And how does that help you prepare?

Brooks: Gives me time on my own... And it makes my body feel clean... and receptive.

Interviewer: And is there anything else about that?

Brooks: (pause) Clears my head...

Interviewer: It clears your head... And how exactly is that useful?

Brooks: My head is empty and receptive...not blocked...not distracted...

Interviewer: And what else is there about that 'not blocked' and 'not distracted'...that receptiveness?

Brooks: I'm free from my body... Don't have to think about my body... Not distracted by bodily function...

Interviewer: Is there anything else about that you'd like to share with us?

Brooks: It gives me time alone for a few minutes...

Interviewer: 'Time alone'... thank you.

Brooks: (pause) But I don't think about the session.

Interviewer: Right. 'Time alone' – 'don't think about the session'. Thank you.

Interviewer: What is the reason you do therapy?

Brooks: Because I'm asked to do...

Interviewer: Because you're 'asked to do'... and... what is the reason... that you... trained yourself to become skilled to be able to do what people asked you to do?

Brooks: I didn't know I was doing it.

Interviewer: Right.

Brooks: (pause)

Interviewer: And what else is there about not knowing that helps you to do it?

Brooks: (long pause)

Interviewer: That's it. You do therapy because you're asked to do it. When you're asked to do it what is it about being asked to do it... (long pause) that's relevant to this modelling learning... sharing...

Brooks: I just do it.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interviewer: What is the first thing you become aware of when working with a client?

Brooks: Their eyes...

Interviewer: And what is it about 'their eyes' that's important that you notice?

Brooks: How much... how much love...

Interviewer: 'How much love'.

Interviewer: And as you sense that you're noticing 'how much love', how does that help you as you continue the process of helping them?

Brooks: (pause)

Interviewer: That's it. In their eyes, 'how much love'...

Brooks: I just...I just want them... to love more...

Interviewer: You just 'want them to love more'....

Brooks: (long pause)

Interviewer: And as you notice 'how much love'... and that you 'just want them to love more'... what do you sense that you do next when you sense that you want them to 'love more'?

Brooks: Help them understand that somehow... be part of that for them...

Interviewer: When you meet someone with little love, when you meet a cynic, how do you cope with that situation? How do you feel?

Brooks: I love them more...

Interviewer: What's the most useful belief you have about yourself as a therapist?

Brooks: (pause) I'm impermanent...

Interviewer: And how is that belief useful?

Brooks: (long pause) Everything's possible... everything's possible because nothing...nothing...nothing's real, nothing seems real.

Interviewer: 'Everything is possible' and 'nothing seems real'...

Interviewer: I'm wondering when you do hypnotherapy, when you put people into relaxation, is it the relaxation state that's healing them or the words?

Brooks: Neither. Their honesty. Their acceptance...

Interviewer: What kind of 'acceptance' is that acceptance?

Brooks: Acceptance of themselves, and who they are, and what they can give and be and... what they can give and be.

Interviewer: 'What they can give and be'...

Interviewer: How do you know how much time to give to your client to go inside and heal themselves?

Brooks: I don't know... I don't know how much time. There's never enough time...

Interviewer: When you're working with a client, how do you know the strategy... or approach to use at any given moment?

Brooks: (long pause) I watch. And I say something and I watch. And I may say something different, and I watch. And... sometimes I

go back... and say something again...and I watch. I just watch...and speak.

Interviewer: And what do you do that helps you remember to do the things that you've done at each stage?

Brooks: I don't have to remember....

Interviewer: You 'don't have to remember'....

Brooks: I don't have to try...

Interviewer: Right. You 'don't have to try'... (pause) And where do the metaphors come from?

Brooks: Life experience...

Interviewer: 'Life experience'...

Brooks: Many...many...many life experiences.

Interviewer: 'Many life experiences'...

Interviewer: What do you do that makes your therapy so effective?

Brooks: Trust myself and trust him/her ...and... I talk without saying anything...

Interviewer: You 'talk without saying anything', how do you do that?

Brooks: Just know...

Interviewer: You 'just know'...

Brooks: I just know the words over... to him/her.

Interviewer: And if we wanted to 'just know the words over' to him or her, how would we do that?

Brooks: You trust, trust yourself.

Interviewer: Who are you when you do therapy?

Brooks: I don't know. I'd like to be him all the time...

Interviewer: And what is it about him that you'd like to be 'all the time'?

Brooks: Honest...unconditional...

Interviewer: 'Unconditional'...

Brooks: Nobody...

Interviewer: When the session has already begun, how do you go into the most effective state of mind to deal with the situation?

Brooks: I give myself to it, him or her. I don't like not giving myself to him or her...

Interviewer: And how do you 'give yourself' to him, it or her?

Brooks: I just know myself over...

Interviewer: And what kind of knowing is that knowing?

Brooks: It has no edges...

Interviewer: 'It has no edges'. And what kind of experience is a 'has no edges' experience?

Brooks: It is better than sex... which can be pretty good.

Interviewer: And in which way or which ways would a person who wanted to have 'no edges' go about having no edges too?

Brooks: Accept...

Interviewer: 'Accept'...

Brooks: Accept...that they are all they have and no more. Nothing else... to be achieved... to... (the sentence trails off and ends)

Interviewer: 'Accept all they have...and no more...nothing else to be achieved too'...okay...

Interviewer: What do you do to access the information you need to work with?

Brooks: It's there. It's there. The person tells me things, does things, looks like something. And then what I do is there... there... and I do it. It comes from nowhere. It feels like the best place.

Interviewer: How do you establish the rapport from the instant you meet the person you're treating?

Brooks: (pause) I watch... and accept...

Interviewer: 'You watch and accept'...

Brooks: Watch, I watch...accept and wait... and play. Watch, accept and wait and play...

Interviewer: When you 'accept'...and you're waiting, what are you waiting for?

Brooks: Waiting for some magic...

Interviewer: 'Some magic'. Where does the magic come from?

Brooks: It's there in him, in her, in them. And I just wait to play with it... with the magic. And sometimes they are very foolish and they're very funny. It's fun. I enjoy playing with...playing with foolishness. Behind the foolishness there is wisdom... and magic... It's a shame when the Fool... when the Fool gets carried away and... thinks it's more important than the person.

Interviewer: And how is it Stephen that you tune into your client?

Brooks: Just be there and nowhere else, and kind of be them and not be them. And... love them without any emotion...and wish they were you and you were them, and send your knowing over there.

Interviewer: And how do you know when to elicit... start to elicit resources within the client?

Brooks: They tell me...

Interviewer: They tell you...how do they tell you?

Brooks: Glimpses... glimpses through their foolishness...

Interviewer: So they tell you by 'glimpses'...

Brooks: Sometimes they go around in circles... and you can see the door, but they can't see it... and it's obvious, and sometimes there is more than one door. Often there are many doors...

Interviewer: And how do you help them to see that door or those doors?

Brooks: (pause) I don't know. They see it. I... I use words that bounce them around, until they see the glimpse through their foolishness, maybe something very small sometimes something big. It doesn't matter. They lose part of their foolishness for a second... that's usually enough.

Interviewer: Does your Buddhism influence the way you create your therapy?

Brooks: I never thought it did, but yes...

Interviewer: And how does it do that?

Brooks: It hasn't told me yet... (long pause)

Interviewer: Have you asked it?

Brooks: (pause) Yes, I try. It needs a lot more from me before it's willing to share I think.

Interviewer: What do you believe about yourself when you're doing therapy?

Brooks: I don't know... I don't know... I don't know who I am. I do therapy. I have nothing to compare myself to.

Interviewer: And how could that be useful to us?

Brooks: Just don't be there... You've nothing to gain...

Interviewer: How did you reach the place of love that allows you to see it in others?

Brooks: I'm still learning... I'm only in the kindergarten...

Interviewer: And what do you learn in kindergarten?

Brooks: I told you. I don't know... I don't know what's ahead... And I don't care either.

Interviewer: How do you turn your life's experience into therapeutic tools?

Brooks: I enjoy paradox. And... paradox... I love paradox. If I had some I'd put them all over the place. I'd put them on the windowsill... as reminders. That you never know... you can't ever be... what you think you are or what you... what you want to be... or what... and I like extremes. I like to have sweet and soft, and I eat salt with sugar.

Interviewer: Is it the extremes that allow you to be so (?)...

Brooks: It means I can go right to the edge... and back again... it's just more life... much more life... and... it doesn't matter... it's not real anyway... it doesn't matter... it doesn't matter... you can go wherever you want... within reason...

Interviewer: Stephen, can you describe to us your most powerful and memorable session?

Brooks: I don't know... I don't remember any one session being that way. But I enjoyed... I enjoyed a clap of thunder once. Where...halfway through a session. Regent's College, London. In a big hall there and there were...I don't know...500 or so people that I'd invited free of charge. I'd invited the first 100 free of charge, then when person 101 booked I said to the office just let them all come. Then half way through a session with a woman, I said her unconscious would give her a very special experience that would enlighten her in some way...and she went down in trance and we waited and waited for a long time...and nothing had happened. Then just as she was about to lift her head and say something there was an enormous thunderclap. And I lifted my arms up into the air as if to say thank you – and everybody fell about laughing... and a year or two later she saw me and gave me a certificate to say that she had paid and put something in her will for a tree to be planted every year in my name...(long pause)

Interviewer: It can be a wonderful experience to know that you've done something that's made such a positive impression... on a person.

Brooks: (pause) I didn't do it

Interviewer: Who did it Stephen?

Brooks: (long pause)

Interviewer: Where was the magic?

Interviewer: Stephen is there anything more you want to tell us?

Brooks: Ask me later... in a few hundred years.

Brooks: (silence)

Interviewer: Would you like to begin to return to consciousness or would you like to continue?

Brooks: It's up to you.

Interviewer: Let's return to consciousness....

Brooks returns and the session ends.

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