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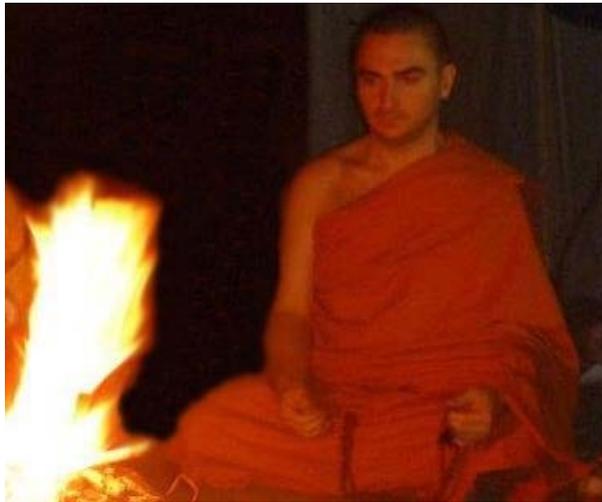
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Interviews

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## Yoga and Hypnosis



We spoke with Swami Santoshananda Saraswati (David Smith III) about hypnosis and the power of the subconscious mind. He speaks about the relevance of hypnosis to yoga.

### What is hypnosis?

Hypnosis is a natural state of mind that everyone experiences daily. A hypnotist helps you into this receptive state where suggestions are then given to your subconscious mind to have positive effects on your life.

### What is hypnosis like?

It's like when you watch a movie. You are relaxed and focused at the same. You've tuned out the rest of the world and are involved in the story. So much so, your body reacts to things happening on the screen and feels them as if they were real. Consciously you know it's just light on a screen but your subconscious registers fear, joy, and the emotional swell anyway.

### So there is a conflict between the conscious and subconscious minds?

Yes, this conflict between what you think you know and what you experience is why I call my business SubconsciousAlwaysWins.com. Because whenever there is a conflict between your conscious and subconscious minds, your subconscious always wins. Think about how common this conflict is. People say one thing like "Today I won't snack!" and they end up doing it anyway.

### How can hypnosis help me?

Hypnosis speaks directly to your subconscious mind. Because it works at such a deep level of the mind, changes happen very quickly and organically. And when it is tailored to your specific needs the applications are infinite.

### How much hypnosis is required to see effects?

That varies from person to person but generally changes are seen very quickly – often after just one session.

### How is hypnosis different to meditation?

You aim to practice meditation by yourself, but hypnosis is guided by a hypnotist. Meditation is a far reaching process that reveals your inner workings and sometimes there are stubborn spots that need special attention – that's where hypnosis

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helps, by focusing on specific issues. They are complementary practices.

### How is hypnosis different to Yoga Nidra?

Yoga Nidra is a gentle practice that allows the mind and body to release tensions and heal itself. It is a great practice and I teach it regularly. Hypnosis is more direct and employs different techniques to get results. Where hypnosis is like watching a movie with the picture painted for you, yoga nidra is more like listening to classical music – you paint the picture.

### What do you say to people who don't think they can be hypnotized?

Remember that hypnosis is a natural state of mind that everyone experiences – so there isn't a person alive who hasn't already experienced hypnosis. Everyone can be guided into a relaxed state, and we are all influenced by suggestions – the advertising industry knows this really well.

So hypnosis and the power of suggestion are already working in your life. Funny enough, it's often the people who say they can't be hypnotized that get the quickest results. I really like working with these people.

### How can hypnosis help me be a better yogi?

Most yogis want to be more regular in their practice and hypnosis can definitely help in this regard. It works really well. If there is something that you want to do but you always get distracted and end up not doing it – then that is a clear indicator of subconscious blocks. These blocks can be cleared with hypnosis.

### So hypnosis helps to remove old habits and develop new habits?

Yes, that is definitely one of the key applications of hypnosis, though there are many other uses for hypnosis – such as dealing with pain, phobias, anxieties, accelerated learning and healing, performance, relationships – and anything else that you can think of.

### Is hypnosis dangerous?

No – hypnosis is a state of relaxation. It is not dangerous. A hypnotist cannot make you do anything that you don't want to do.

### How long have you be practicing yoga?

I started practicing yoga 13 years ago and now I am a swami and a yoga teacher. I live at Ashram Yoga's Ohui Retreat and have been working closely with Swami Shantimurti Saraswati. He has given me a much deeper understanding of yoga – especially with regard to *prana* (energy) and the mind.

### What is your background as a hypnotist?

Most of my working life has been involved in training people. I have worked for the FBI, US military, law enforcement and medical professionals. I have a BFA in Theatre Arts and have trained and directed actors. Becoming a certified hypnotherapist was a natural progression because I've been using the techniques for years.

It is so effective at getting results, but is so much more than just a set of techniques. For me, it's an adventure. I often think that my work is like a cross between Alice in Wonderland, The Matrix, Inception and The Secret. It's a lot of fun!

### What else do you teach?

My main interest is esoteric spirituality – real magic and supernatural powers – which I have investigated in many places – from practical paganism through to fundamental Southern Baptist Christianity. I'm also an experienced lucid dreamer and dream interpreter. So I teach about that. And I teach courses on sexuality and spirituality.



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If you are interested in talking with Santosh about hypnosis or related topics, then please [contact us](#).

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24 Cheshire St  
Parnell, Auckland  
New Zealand

### **Ohui Retreat**

Opoutere Beach  
Coromandel Peninsula  
North Island, New Zealand