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An Interview With

By Dwight Damon

Debbie Papadakis

DD: It's always nice to interview one of our members from another country.

DP: We Canadians are just next-door neighbors and we love to come down to the States for our annual convention re-charge every year.

DD: Actually your accent is definitely not that of a typical north-of-the border citizen, is it?

DP: I've never gotten rid of my Greek accent and probably never will. I love Canada, but am still very proud of my Greek heritage.

DD: Did you emigrate to Canada as a child?

DP: No, I grew up in Greece and came over when I was twenty.

DD: With the history of hypnotism and the ancient Sleep Temples, and even the origin of the word hypnotism maybe it was your destiny to become a hypnotist. Is there much awareness of all this in your native land?

DP: Not really, because there is still, even in this era, an underlying superstition and misapprehension that has been passed down through generations.

DD: Since it wasn't a popular topic when you were growing up, how did you happen to develop an interest?

DP: I guess I have always been interested in hypnotism. I've been an avid reader about human personalities and how the mind works since I was a teenager, and hypnotism sort of came along with that. Growing up in Greece, I read many books in my native language, but the selection at that time was very limited. Later on, I was delighted to be able to read books on hypnotism in English.

DD: Obviously your early passion for learning about the human mind and also hypnotism led you in the right direction.

DP: There has never been enough information for me—it seemed the more I read, the less I knew. My penchant for learning led me to further explore the area of hypnotism, and the



factors surrounding human personalities.

DD: What is your favorite book, video or audio concerning hypnotism?

DP: The one I considered my bible is *Suggestive Therapeutics* by Bernheim, also *Suggestive Therapeutics* by Munro; *Hypnotherapy* by Dave Elman; most of Leo Bolduc's books; *Regression Therapy a Handbook for Professionals* by Winifred Blake Lucas Ph.D.; *The Handbook of Hypnotic Phenomena in Psychotherapy*, by John H. Edgette, Psy.D. and Janel Sasson Edgette, Psy.D., *Hypnosis in the Relief of Pain*, by Joseph Barber, Ph.D.; and *Analytical Hypnotherapy Principles and Practice*, by E.A. Barnett, MD. And there are at least another 300 hundred great hypnotism books that I have in my library.

DD: You must have found some source for personal instruction along the way, right?

DP: Yes, the late Bill Curry of Toronto was my first and greatest teacher in hypnotism. His main interest was healing—the mind/body connection. A group of us spent almost two years, in many weekend and evening classes, discussing the power of the mind. The classes started in rooms at the University of Toronto, but changed at some point and we began to hold the classes in my living room.

DD: How about educational back-

ground that prepared you for a career as a hypnotist/hypnotherapist?

DP: I studied psychotherapy for four years at the Transformational Arts College in Toronto. I also studied with many great hypnotists/hypnotherapists including Dr. Richard Harte, Leo Bolduc, Jerry Kein, Tad James, Maurice Kershaw, Reverend Scot Giles, Don Mottin, Dr. Irene Hickman, and Dr. Baldwin.

DD: So, you actually started out with psychotherapy?

DP: Yes, I began my career as a psychotherapist. As I continued my education and became more involved in the study of human dynamics I found myself doing more and more in the field of hypnotherapy and past life regressions. Also, as I saw more clients and my practice grew, I found that I was being asked for sessions involving NLP and time line therapy.

In 1997 I took the NGH certification course and I opened my office. Originally I was providing more psychotherapy than hypnosis, but as time passed I found myself with more clients wanting to work with me through hypnosis.

DD: Are you in practice full-time?

DP: Yes, I practice full time. I also teach the NGH hypnotism certification courses a few times per year, as well as a number of other popular courses concerning different aspects of hypnotism.

I have a very successful one-on-one therapy practice with clients who come from all over the world. Eighty percent of my work is referrals; 10% of my work is without charge to help those less fortunate. I dedicate one day a month to work with people who are considered "difficult" in a high school. The modalities that I use are a mixture of hypnotherapy, psychotherapy, time line therapy, NLP and Reiki. I also use many sub modalities of psychotherapy, including: "inner child work; chair

therapy; voice dialoguing; forgiveness; focusing techniques and many more. I have created a technique called "decording." This is a combination of eastern and native techniques. The results have been phenomenal. We have clients flying in from around the world for therapy and to work with me on their problems.

DD: So, in your work hypnosis proved to be very important.

DP: Definitely. Hypnosis is my primary modality. I then incorporate the rest of my modalities. I go to great lengths to help people heal themselves and they often transform their lives. Emotional healing has been an important part of my practice. Through therapy, my clients are able to remove negative emotions limiting beliefs and find the freedom they seek.

DD: What is the current situation for the practice of hypnosis in your province of Canada?

DP: Each province in Canada has different laws regarding hypnosis. In Ontario hypnosis was unregulated in 1997. Now a group of us have joined together to increase awareness and encourage acceptance.

DD: What benefits have you personally received from being a hypnotist?

DP: My personal and professional life has been enhanced in many ways. I have received many benefits, some easy to identify, others more difficult. My life is fulfilled; my relationship with my husband Chris and my two sons, Konstantin and Michael has been transformed in all areas. With reference to my professional life, I feel blessed to have so many thousands of satisfied clients and students who have benefited from my work.

DD: Is there anything different about your approach to hypnosis?

DP: I have developed different approaches to the way I approach hypnosis—I speak to organizations and associations across the country, educating them on the benefits of hypnosis. I will accept clients who have been unable to get the results they seek—through their diligence, many of my

clients suddenly seem to get it, and their problems melt away.

DD: Do you have any helpful hints for new practitioners?

DP: I encourage newcomers to do many hours of practicum, to do work on themselves and to work with other new colleagues. Also to study—to learn different approaches from the many schools of thought when it comes to hypnosis.

DD: What types of things should a person do that offer the best chance of success?

DP: Know thyself. Know your limits. Prioritize. The client is number one!

DD: What are the biggest problems you've encountered?

DP: Not enough hours in the day to accomplish all I set out to do each day!

DD: Where can a person go to get help and support?

DP: A person can ask for support from the school where they study hypnosis. There are also many networking groups available through emails, or they can call anyone who is an NGH member specializing in the issue that they need help with.

I make sure that I am available to my clients and students—I have a toll free phone number. I am the president of the Ontario NGH Chapter and we meet monthly to supply help and support for members. I encourage students to come out and meet each other and learn from potential mentors. I am a mentor to all of my students.

DD: Most folks starting in practice are interested in generating as much income as possible. Any advice?

DP: The best way is to become an expert. This means writing articles and, if possible, getting media attention. As an expert you are often asked to present at conferences and if you are an author, your book is often purchased as part of the conference package. I believe that if practitioners change their attitudes towards money, they will increase their income.

DD: Anything else?

DP: Know your limits. Do not enter areas where you don't belong such as

medical jurisdiction. Focus on your clients' needs and refer clients to the appropriate experts when needed.

DD: What are your thoughts about legislation?

DP: I feel that adhering to the NGH Code of Ethics and morals is very important. Always conducting ourselves in a professional manner, and being aware of the laws in our own place of practice. In my opinion this would provide our profession, colleagues and clients with integrity and definite guidelines. I suggest that by becoming an active member in your community, you dispel the myths about hypnosis.

DD: What do you find the public concept in Canada is about hypnosis, stage hypnosis or any other phase of the profession?

DP: Generally hypnosis is becoming more acceptable around the world. In some parts of the world, hypnosis is still unacceptable because people are afraid of losing control.

As a psychotherapist I have my reservations about stage hypnosis. While a wonderful tool for entertainment and making people laugh, it should only be considered as a form of laugh therapy.

DD: What do you think individual practitioners should be doing to help us become a separate and distinct profession?

DP: Stand firm on our professional ethics—utilizing the NGH standards. Become actively involved in the associations and organizations that embrace the profession.

DD: What changes have you seen since you started?

DP: Since I began my practice, hypnosis has become more acceptable.

DD: Is there anything you would like to see the Guild do differently?

DP: No, I am very happy with the Guild. The support, resources, and timely information as well as the friendliness is what most of us really appreciate. Keep up the good work!

DD: Do you enjoy reading Guild publications?

DP: I not only enjoy reading the pub-

lications, I utilize most of the resources and sources of information offered. The publications are full of valuable information, which I share with my colleagues and my clients where appropriate. I am very proud to be a member of the Guild; the extra help we get through the publications along with the additional support is gratifying. I hear many appreciative comments from my students – they are surprised at what they obtain once they become members and receive their packages.

DD: Do you enjoy one publication more than another?

DP: I like the *Journal of Hypnotism* because of the content; it is just jammed packed with wisdom from colleagues around the world.

DD: I've seen you at a lot of our annual conventions.

DP: Yes. I have been coming to the conventions since the first year I

became a member with the NGH. I have only missed one, and that was because I was at another training session, and I was not able to escape.

DD: Is there anything you like best about our annual convention?

DP: This is a difficult question to answer. There are so many benefits from attending. I love to learn new techniques, to listen to other hypnotherapists sharing experiences. There are always new ways to improve my work. I enjoy meeting and networking with so many of my colleagues. It is a chance to have fun, to watch the stage shows, to be under the same roof with so many like-minded individuals. The energy is contagious! I find I can bring that energy back to my practice and share it with the people that are around me.

The only downside of this year's conference was that I was unable to attend a few of the workshops because I did

not do my planning in a timely manner, and the tickets were sold out. I'll make sure that I'm on time, and the first one registered for next year's events!

DD: What do you see as the future of hypnotism?

DP: I am positive that the future of hypnotism is on the rise. It can only go one way and that's up. There is so much suffering going around that society as a whole needs to look within themselves to find answers to their problems. Hypnosis is a powerful tool and cannot be ignored. I see more and more people accepting hypnotism as an adjunct modality that can add value and improve the medical model. ▼

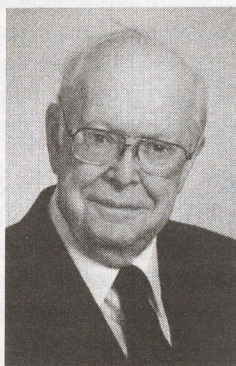
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WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT NGH



The National Guild of Hypnotists has great importance to me as it has been present in my life for fully half the time I have been upon this planet. I suppose I am one of the few persons, still living, who communicated with its founder, Dr. Rexford North, way back in 1950. That's more than half a century. To me it has always been a place of warm friendship combined with a source of knowledge unparalleled in devotion to the promotion of hypnotism (especially in its therapeutic forms) for the benefit of mankind. Through many years of association with the Guild, I have seen it grow and grow into the largest organization of its kind in the world today. Never will it stop growing, as the advance of the art/science of hypnosis has an unquestioned destiny of perpetual growth.

Ormond McGill

Ormond McGill, PhD - Palo Alto, CA - is known as "The Dean of American Hypnotists." He has an international reputation for his excellent books on hypnotism, meditation and mysticism. Prominent in the field of hypnotism for over 50 years. He is the author of *The Encyclopedia of Genuine Stage Hypnotism*, *A Better Life Through Conscious Self-Hypnosis*, *The Art of Stage Hypnotism*, *Hypnotism and Meditation*, *Power Hypnosis Hypnotherapy* and many other books.