

THE DESCENT INTO ALPHA

*A Journalist's Account Of The Silva Mind
Control Class - From the Boston Globe -1972*

The Boston Globe

Journalist From The Boston Globe Investigates The Silva Method

This particular article talks about the ESP and mental exercises one learns from Silva Mind Control classes.

A journalist for the Boston Globe decided to investigate the class after hearing many of the claims about the Silva Method back in 1972.

If you have been to a recent Silva Method course, you will see fundamental similarities from 1972 with today's current training's of the Silva Method.

An important point to note about this article is that its important to enter the seminar with an open mind.

As you will see from the article, Silva Method training has always been very powerful and efficient in developing ESP abilities in its students.

Although there are a few important changes that have happened in the last 40 years.

The pricing mentioned and core structure described the programs of the 70s, much has changed, the 4 days course that is described, is now taught as 2 separate programs - Silva Life System and Silva Ultra Mind System.

Students no longer have to take these programs live - You can study the program at home - for more information go to www.silvalifesystem.com

I loved this article, its important to realize that different instructors have different styles. Not everyone will have the same experience as the writer.

I wanted to make this article available to you because what I like is the objectivity and honest review from the author.

So read on for the full article.

Better and Better,



Laura Silva Quesada



The Descent Into Alpha

By Robert Taylor, Boston Globe staff writer.

A cynic's tale of conversion after four days of confronting his own brain waves.

To begin with, there was the ever-present possibility of fraud. I am a child of the age of **Mencken**. As a newspaperman I have been exposed to a well-tempered scale of pious quackery: I have been lugged like a sack of potatoes on the shoulders of sensitivity-circle zealots. I have consumed blackstrap molasses and yogurt in my green youth and organic gruel in my sere and yellow leaf. **Furthermore**, I am cognizant of criticisms aimed at Mind Control by reputable scientists. What Mind Control is, says Dr. Elmer Green, a research psychologist at the **Menninger Foundation of Topeka**, "is a very intense hypnotic induction. People have been doing this for a hundred years." In a Globe interview, Dr. **Thomas B. Mulholland**, who heads the perception lab at the Bedford Veterans Administration Hospital, said that Mind Control graduates tend to be people who seek a **readymade** answer to their problems outside themselves.

On the other hand, Dr. Walter Houston dark of Newton, a psychologist for more than 40 years familiar with the phenomena of altered states of consciousness, actually took the Silva Mind Control course and called it "a progressive, responsible and beneficial enterprise." His response was confirmed by psychiatrists at the Menninger Foundation. Clearly there was disagreement among the savants. On balance, though, it looked like a very tricky subject, and as I drove toward my first Silva Mind Control session to begin four days, 48 hours, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. training on two weekends, I had to contend with my prejudices.

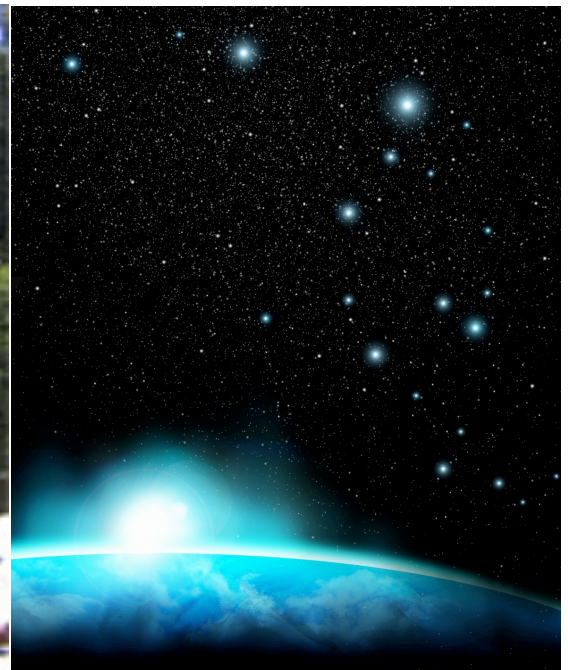
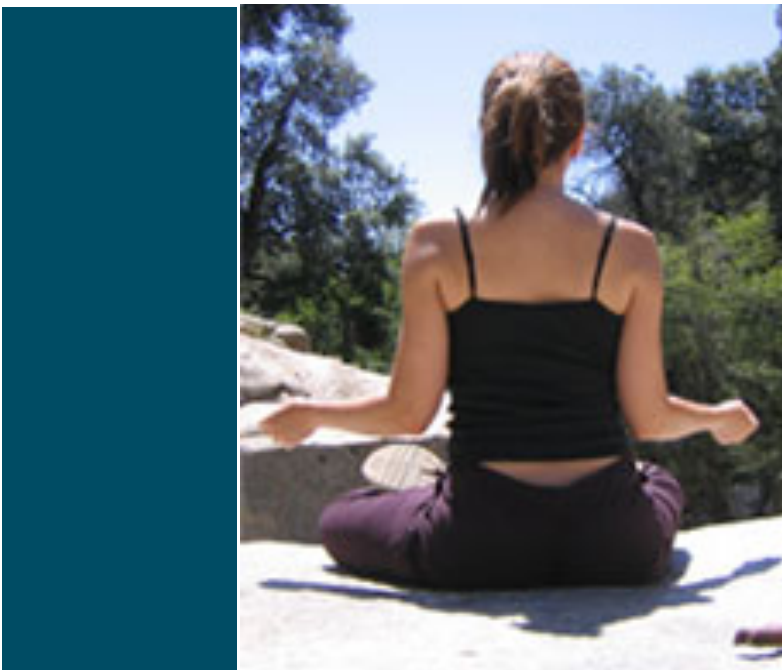
I was prepared for anything.

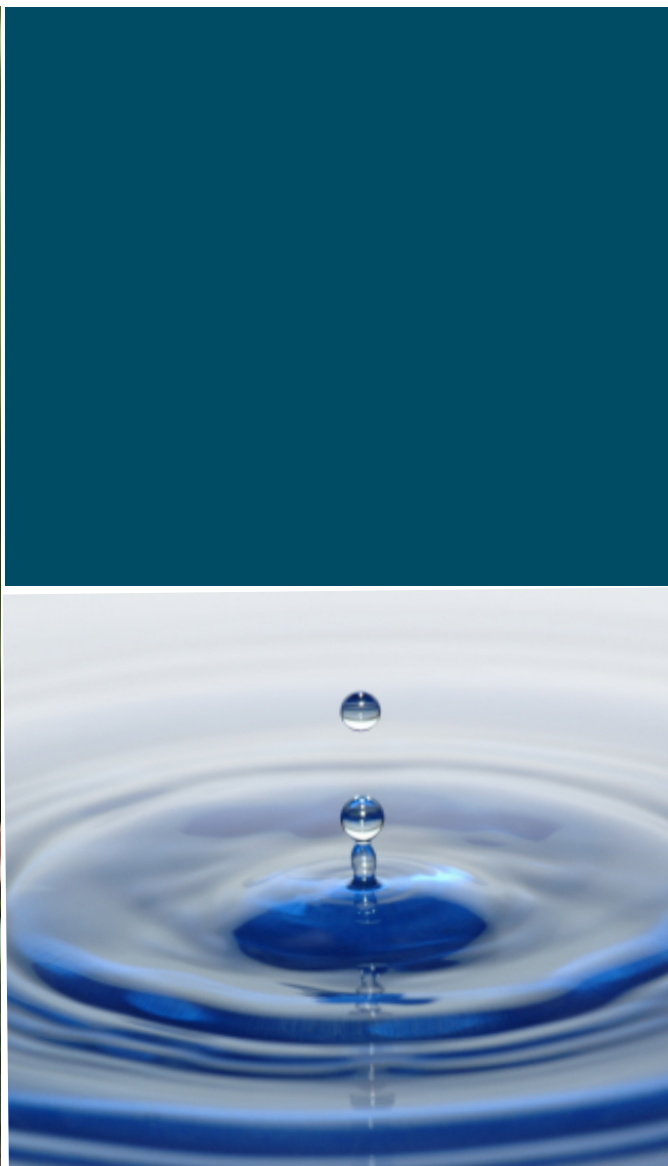
What I was not prepared for was a spiritual experience.

Before continuing this account of a four-day psychic trip, it is necessary to define its background.

In 1929, when the German physiologist **Hans Berger** discovered that the brain emits faint electrical impulses identified with different states of consciousness, his work went largely unnoticed. Not until the 1950s, after technology made it possible to measure these patterns, did the study of brainwaves get into high gear. (More than a decade ago, studies of **Zen and Yoga meditators** disclosed they are more adept at producing alpha waves than other test subjects.) Through the use of the sensitive amplifier used to record brain frequencies, the **EEG**, or electroencephalogram, four basic types of impulses were classified.

- **Beta**; 14 to 40 cycles per second, the highest-frequency brainwaves, it is associated with the sense perception. The eyes are open, in waking state. You are in beta now.
- **Alpha**; 7 to 14 cycles per second, is associated with meditation, daydreaming, **ESP** and hypnosis, relaxed, pleasant state of awareness.





- Theta; 4 to 7 cycles per second, vibrating at the borderline of sleep. There are hints it may be man's most creative, problem-solving range.

- Delta; 0 to 4 cycles per second, are the brainwaves of deep sleep. Newborn infants spend most of their time in delta, although little research has been done on this level.

While Mind Control, the system devised by Jose Silva, a former electrical engineer from Laredo, Texas, and also taught by some two dozen spinoff competitors such as Mind Dynamics and Alpha Dynamics, deals with brain wave concepts, it should not be confused with the related field of bio-feedback training.

About 60 West Coast companies manufacture "alpha control" machines, which beep or tweet the state of a plugged-in subject's brainwaves. Biological feedback measures brain energy. It's a method for attaining conscious control over involuntary bodily processes, blood pressure, nervous tension and heartbeat. Once the user discovers, through the beeps that describe his brainwaves, how to monitor the processes, then he is supposed to proceed without the help of the device.

Mind Control accentuates mental development rather than brain energy, teaches students how to reach the alpha state at will and cultivate extra-sensory projection. The psychic aspects of the course are vulnerable, obviously, to Beta criticism. Silva Mind Control has drawn more flak, however, from biological-feedback researchers, who contend Silva should not claim to train alpha state—with all its attendant benefits, including control of weight, sleep, smoking, headaches and pain—unless the course can measure the alpha waves beyond the shadow of a doubt.

A recent technical study at Trinity University, San Antonio, which bears the formidable title "EEG Correlates of Attention in Humans," indicates, though, verbal training induces alpha functioning, and graduates of Mind Control do indeed produce alpha waves.

So much for background. It only remains to be said that institutions as various as C. W. Post College and Canisius are planning to offer the course, the former in the business college, and Canisius as part of the Department of Religious Studies.

Man's mind is limitless.

Conscious control of the subconscious—the peace that passeth all understanding, practiced by Christian and Hebrew mystics, Muslim Sufis, Indian yogis and Zen masters—is available to western culture.

On these premises Jose Silva has based his teaching. I came to his Mind Control course via an interview with him. As I've said, I'm a child of the age of H. L. Mencken rather than Aquarius, by temperament a professional skeptic. But, as such, it tickled me that a Mexican-American of haphazard formal education, out of Laredo, Texas, a municipality best known for its streets and a cowboy wrapped in white linen as cold as the clay, should make the professionals of the U.S. psychology establishment in their groves of academe react to the territorial imperative, bare their teeth and growl low in their throats. I half-expected a mod capitalist pop guru.

Instead, Silva turned out to be clear, cogent and

“Over 50,000 people have graduated in the United States and London, and branches are planned in Brazil, Nicaragua, Israel, France and Austria”

unpretentious. His history was the saga of a man of principle. The stocky, soft-spoken father of Mind Control had spent decades in research supported entirely without foundation money or academic entanglements, risked religious excommunication and social ostracism from the most conformist hinterland of our conformist society. He was steeped in Freud, Jung and Adler and believed Freud had erred in abandoning hypnoanalysis; but he could hardly speak English until Texas students, excited by what filtered through to them six years ago, agreed to swap English lessons for Mind Control classes. Silva had been realistic enough to package his teaching so that he could keep on teaching it, still it seemed patent that he practiced his message. His children were the earliest graduates. Moreover, refuting intemperate charges of heresy, he has seen hundreds of clergy take his course, and ecumenically offers it free to the holy orders of any recognized persuasion. Over 50,000 people have graduated in the United States and London, and branches are planned in Brazil, Nicaragua, Israel, France and Austria. It costs \$150 (there are family discounts) though graduates may take refresher seminars and enroll again and again without charge. Mind Control City, now under construction in Florida, has no direct ties to Silva and his Institute, but is the work of an enthusiastic grad who happens to be a developer. Students and faculty have taken Mind Control at Incarnate Word High School, San Antonio, Silva country, of course, yet in New York City there is a growing trend among businessmen to send executives and

sales personnel through brainwave training. The man who can program himself to give up smoking and lose weight can program himself to solve corporate problems.

Mind Control at one end of its spectrum teeters on a smile and a shoeshine, dispensing a-homely, down-to-earth psychology of winning friends and influencing people, and, at the other, heals psychosomatic and corporeal maladies and broadcasts to the interstellar deeps.

I queried Jose Silva about the remonstrances of Dr. Elmer Green and Silva said the course was the opposite of hypnosis. Having outside agencies control us is nowadays so common that most persons are unaware of outside control: his techniques established a basis for developing the self.

Couldn't some unscrupulous force, I asked, an ill-disposed social order or some embodiment of Mr. Big, acquire Mind Control and use it to reduce us to zombie status?

Not at all; Silva insisted his syllabus enables each individual student to govern his energy by intelligent self-management. True, the Russians have long been developing psychic research, an offshoot of their space program, and Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder in their book *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain*, state the Soviet government supports para-psychological research to the tune of an estimated 20 million rubles a year. The U.S. budget is apparently zero.

Whatever the Soviets intend to do with their psychic discoveries, one thing they can't do is place the double-whammy on the US. Jose Silva emphasized that harmful ESP is an impossibility. In 1965, after investing over a half-million dollars and nearly a quarter-century of his life, and believing he and his associates had discovered something of enormous value, Silva wrote and



offered it to President Johnson. The White House The White House flatly rejected the offer.

Silva kept right on going. The royalties from his corporation support him and his family comfortably, but he siphons a percentage of the tuition toward scientific exploration.

I mentioned the Boston Strangler case. He said the Dutch medium, Peter Hurkos, the police consultant, had in fact solved the case but made a simple beta-level mistake: there were two individuals with similar characteristics, a bizarre coincidence, and when Hurkos returned from the psychic dimension, he chose the wrong man. Silva started talking about transmitting and receiving (most "psychics" are natural receivers). On the beta plane I found myself agreeing with him, Q.E.D., but when he presented his vision of a tomorrow, every man a functioning mystic and tapping unplumbed powers, I expressed reservations.

"Why don't you take the course?" he said.

Fair enough.

You see, I have this romantic mental picture of myself as more open-minded than LBJ.

"Silva's psychic," said my wife, Brenda. "Why did he bother? Couldn't he have foreseen that the President would turn it down?"

Brenda, a sibyl of sorts, had become interested in mind control. Jose had generously provided my own working press, freeloader's scholarship; still, I felt that if you were taking the classes you might as well go all the way, and invested the (\$150 for an authentic family induction. It is one thing to attend a concert as a critic; another as a member of the paying public.

"Why doesn't he bankrupt The Game?" I said. "Regard it with the eye of faith."

The eye of faith was clouding over. The morning was filled by thick rain, the Saturday traffic sparse. On the highway, contestants in The Great Race, a zany annual marathon between Watertown and Marblehead, were streaming



"Welcome." He said, "to one of the most interesting experiences of your life."

He explained that Mind Control will work if you want it to, for the factor of motivation must be present."

northward. A man sailed past on a high-wheeled bike. So did clots of cyclists. The procession stretched from the General Edwards Bridge to Wonderland. There were gasping runners, military striders, a one-hoss shay. At every dip of the road, it seemed, astonishing hallucinations swam across the screen of consciousness. Suddenly I began to feel much better about Jose's version of the mind. Near Bell Circle, Revere, a contraption consisting of a dozen or fifteen beer-gulping men arranged in tiers, floundering and pedaling, swayed across the rainswept void.

"What's that?" Brenda asked.

"Beta reality," I told her.

Christian D. Jensen was standing before a chart, which depicted the frequencies of awareness, Beta in blue, Alpha in green, Theta in red and Delta in black. He is New England Regional Director of Mind Control. "Welcome." He said, "to one of the most interesting experiences of your life."

He sketched the contours of the course, explained that Mind Control will work if you want it to, for the factor of motivation must be present. He traced the physical evolution of the brain, relating Delta to the oldest portion at the rear, Alpha to the mid-part and Beta to the forepart. "Our purpose is to gain control over these older frequencies, to reach a deeper, healthier level of mind.

Now — since we were going to share a fragment of our lives together — could we identify ourselves and explain why we're here?"

During the next forty-eight class hours I came to know most of my fellow pilgrims. In our metaphysical way we formed a community definitely more cohesive than, say, my college contemporaries (scattered on the winds of war) or that T-group in which the dictum "please touch" became a form of subtle psychological aggression. Not all of us would finish together due to staggered schedules and other reasons; but the major part of the group meeting the first weekend in The Hotel Lenox would graduate the next weekend at Aquinas Junior College, Newton. I could not define any ready-made category. Two nuns and a Unitarian minister, white- and blue-collar workers, a medical doctor who preferred anonymity, a cluster of chiropractors with their wives, a lawyer, a real estate salesman, students, teachers and a musician who said that he "came for the good vibes." Many were taking the course for self-improvement; some were interested in parapsychology. Kenneth, a black construction worker, said he wanted "to take the course for its positive aspects"; Tom, one of the chiropractors, hoped it would make him more aware of his patients' problems. Lillian, an older lady, said, "I'm trying to get caught up with all the things I've never done in my life."

A sprinkling of the class were graduates back for a brush-up. They had stories to tell about experiences ranging from miraculous cures and precognitive dreams to incidents they might have dismissed as trivial coincidences before they took Mind Control. Esther, a graduate, said that she was present "to help Chris on the Beta level with the children's course." This program, shorter, less intensive, which is now being organized, will work with kids from the age of eight.

"I'm here," said Richard, an X-ray technician, "because I can't... "

"Hold it," said Chris Jensen. "Cancel-cancel."

"Can't" is one of the *verboden* words of Mind Control, along with "kill," "burn," "hate," and any destructive term. The brain is a highly sophisticated computer, Jensen said, and when we employ phrases negatively, "I'm sick of that," "He's a pain in the neck," "That burns me up," "I'm dying to do that," we are in effect programming ourselves into sickness, pain, burning out, and death. Mind Control is very concerned with the impact of language on the psyche "You're energizing the words in your own mind," and Jensen indicated that we should be aware alterations of brain frequency are taking place. The computer phrase "cancel-cancel," is a ritual exorcism, like "God be with you," designed to erase the effects of negative vocabulary, clearing the mind for a more positive program. In high-noise areas, negative programming is constantly underway. A black lady from Roxbury, one of the graduates, spoke up and said that in her neighborhood people are terribly exposed to negative programming and that she had achieved beneficial results from a bombardment of violence by steeping her surroundings in classical music.

The remainder of the morning evaporated in a discussion of brainwaves and outer and inner levels of consciousness. The lecture was designed as preparation for our first descent into alpha, which took place after the lunch break.

Techniques? Elementary enough. Look upward at a 45-degree angle till your eyelids tire. Then close your eyes, take a deep breath, repeat and visualize three times the numeral 3. Count down in this manner from 3 to 1. You are now in a therapeutic state of relaxation, Level

1, which "you may use for any purpose you desire."

To the soothing beat of a 10-cycle-per-second alpha wave tape, we drifted into the subconscious like a current of neophyte pearl divers. From Level 1 we continued, led downward by Chris Jensen. "My increasing mental faculties are for serving humanity better," he intoned. "I have full control and complete dominion over my senses and faculties at this level of the mind. I will never allow myself to develop arthritis, diabetes, glaucoma, diseases of the heart or circulatory system, or the disease known as cancer..." The phrases belonged to the conditioning process. Mind Control does not propose practicing medicine without a license (each student has to sign a release on that score) and asserts the doctor assumes an important role for the human being in the mind-body function. But it also believes in the maintenance of health by either physical or mental means.

"How long do you think you were in alpha?" he asked. "Remember, alpha is a spiritual dimension."

"Five minutes," Brenda said.

"Thirty-eight minutes," he announced."

Through exercises such as visualizing an idyllic place, Jensen "deepened" the experience, then guided us by degrees, returning to clock-time consciousness. We had soloed through inner space.

"How long do you think you were in alpha?" he asked. "Remember, alpha is a spiritual dimension."

"Five minutes," Brenda said.

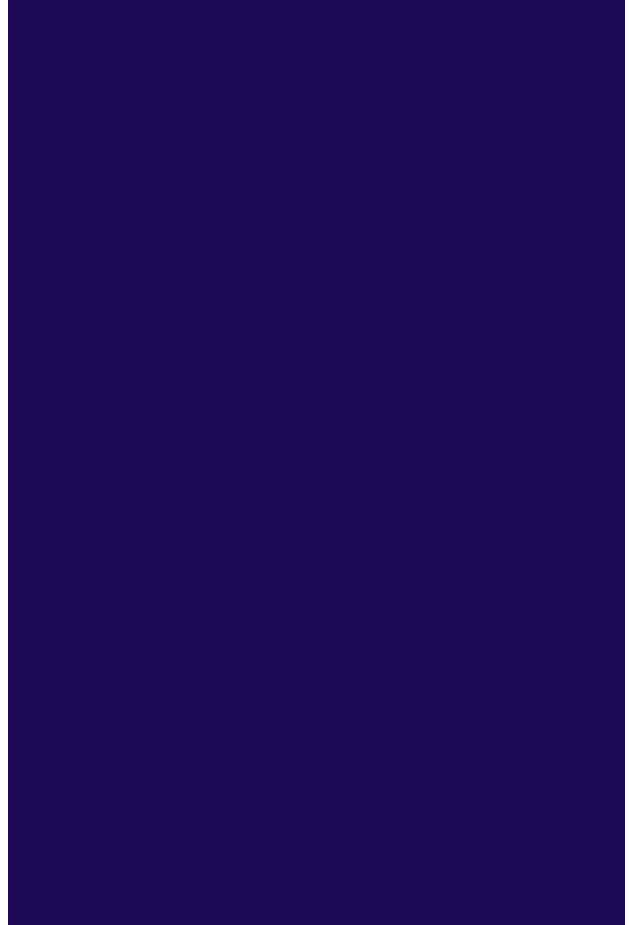
"Thirty-eight minutes," he announced.

In the beginning you sat with your eyes closed, wondering when you'd get there. After several cycles, however, you stopped worrying and went: indeed, the problem was not beta interference, but floating too far, into delta, and falling asleep. It was like any other aptitude. You had to cultivate the knack. Presently you could enter alpha, sportive as a dolphin. Once you found the frequency you also discovered a built-in tranquilizer. Ten minutes of alpha seemed equivalent to a night's rest.

The course roughly fell into two parts. Weekend One: Mind over Matter. Weekend Two: ESP and psychic training. That first weekend we acquired what are dubbed "formula-type" techniques. Sleep Control for entering a natural, physiological sleep anytime, anywhere; a Mental Alarm Clock; Headache Control applied to migraine and tension-type headaches; a three-finger technique for stronger programming of oneself at the alpha level; Dream Control (although the course doesn't presume to interpret dreams); a memory course based on visualization; weight and habit control, and a procedure called Glove Anesthesia, which deals with the control of pain and bleeding.

The second day, Sunday morning, Lillian arrived at class around eight; she had set her mental alarm an hour early. Mary, an art teacher, related that yesterday during alpha, she kept getting flashes of three automobile wheels. "I've never had any type of vision before." When she was driving away from last night's session she got a sensation of the three wheels, stopped the car and discovered a hubcap missing. Chris said that we have to use beta, too. A New York instructor employing a technique called The Mental Screen had visualized his wife and child in a horrible automobile accident. He had carefully replayed the scene, visualizing his wife stopping at the intersection where the accident occurred, then proceeding safely. Next, he phoned her and told her to be very careful and bring the car to the garage. She phoned back an hour later — the mechanic couldn't understand how she got there: the car's brake cylinder was bone-dry.

Testimony is significant. It is, in the phrase of Amy Gross, a writer who took the course, "seeding possibilities, burying them deeper and deeper."



Like all students we huddled together at the breaks and compared hang-ups.

Richard, the Unitarian minister, said, "I'm liberated from a Christian Science background, and I find I'm reacting negatively to a lot of this."

Brenda said, "With me it's the Norman Vincent Peale doctrine and the computer jargon."

Charlotte, a graduate, who with her husband comes back for the conditioning cycles, said to me, "You're not going to write one of those awful I-was-there stories, are you? How I blew my mind in 48 hours?"

"Cancel-cancel," I said.

It was the teacher finally who edged us past the lions in our path. Chris Jensen treated them like household pets. In the second portion of the course he had to deal with some fairly rococo themes, from reincarnation to astral voyaging. By the end, Richard, the minister, had done an accurate psychic reading and "cure" on an afflicted friend of mine, Brenda reported that she no longer was bothered by the dilute ethical exhortations, and as for myself, well, cynic emeritus, I had stopped believing Mencken had all the answers.

The techniques of Mind Control, perhaps applied to a new global sensibility, suggest to an observer of comparative religion, roots in venerable tenets, the "beneficial phrases" about getting better and better and abjuring cancer may be interpreted literally, or as prayer and incantation. The three-finger technique is used by hitchhikers materializing rides or motorists after a parking space—yet also suggests the *mudras*, or salutary gestures, of Hinduism, and it can symbolize the Trinity. The alpha state not only functions as a bundle of voltages but as an aspect of paradise. One could extend these parallels. The initial section of Mind Control, with its

conditioning for creativity and other desirable aims, may be logically explainable. What happens to you in the second half is not.

Small cubes of stainless steel, copper, bronze and lead sit on a table. We press them to our foreheads, the traditional "third eye" of Tibetan theology. Later we descend into alpha and project ourselves inside the metals. Some of us don't see a thing, but to others the experience creates a vista of infinite labyrinths, shining towers and exotic inscapes.

"Don't worry if you don't see anything. When I started out I was a very poor clairvoyant. We are psychic investigators. Remember: we're educating ourselves subjectively to develop our total sensing faculties, ESP in Mind Control is Effective Sensory Projection. Passing from the inanimate, into the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human you'll say it's impossible at first, then 'maybe there's something to that,' and 'I knew it all along.' "

As usual, Chris is nudging us beyond the lions.

We spent the rest of the day imagining ourselves inside plants, animals and the human anatomy. The purpose was 'to build points of reference.' A theory of matter not dissimilar to that of Democritus, the Greek philosopher who posited atoms, was examined. We pictured the living room wall of our home and projected ourselves inside, rapped on the surfaces, sniffed the fiberglass insulation. "You can project healing to pets," Chris said. The importance of motivation in Mind Control was once more stressed; a lady graduate who could use her atomic mind to communicate with the frisky atoms of thoroughbred horses had been programmed to abnormalities as a result of the healing program, and invariably picked the horse running last.

The next project was the construction of a "psychic lab" in which we would work "cases"—that is, persons with severe



health problems—the next day. We would receive a name, age, and address, we would project the image of the person onto the wall of the lab, diagnose the case and invent a "cure." To assist us we would also invent a pair of "counselors," one male and one female.

The concept of the counselors, I gathered, was reassurance. They were, more or less, guardian angels. Mind Control is acutely aware of the prankish note the counselors often provide; but these add, it seemed to me, a liberating human oddity. Frank, an erstwhile gambler and diamond in the rough, said, "I never told nobody this before, but one night I pictured that Mario Lanza came in and sang a few songs for me. Could he be my counselor?" Afterward, furnishing our labs, Frank said he'd gone into his setup and all he'd found was a page of sheet music. ("Frank's beautiful," said Sally, a student.) Surely, Mario was en route. Alas no, Frank's counselors were Philistines.

I had had trouble visualizing the lab. First I flattered myself with the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, then a whitewashed cottage on a knoll. I had willed Bernard Shaw (very high beta gent, he) and Isak Dinesen, on the grounds that delectable conversation would suffice if nothing worked. Surprisingly enough, they complied. A fusillade of wit? Nary a vocable.

Which flustered me, until I realized they had another purpose.

You have entered your laboratory. You are collaborating with Susan who operates a school in Cambridge. She says she will count to three and at the count of three the body of Imogene McCombe, 78, of Arlington, will be on your screen. Scan the image she says, and select the areas of attraction. Hip, shoulder and joints. What about the hip, Susan asks. You amplify the image. She's got a mended hip, you say, and Susan excitedly replies: "Yes, yes." Was this a fluke? An educated guess might be right, especially with a few clues.

Imogene has arthritis. You send help message, anoint her bones. Do you want to do another case, Susan says. You nod and in rapid succession identify symptoms of diabetes, heart trouble, emphysema and glandular deficiency. Sometimes you are wildly wrong, but the percentage of "hits" is astounding. Around the head of a man who has had a stroke you note a dark penumbra. Eventually you switch partners and, working with a doctor, detect a liver complaint after entering into the bodily system of the patient. By now you feel a marathon effort of concentration. You are locked into the frequency, still the pressure is pronounced. Usually the first thought that wings into your mind is a bull's-eye, but you begin to waver as though you support a crushing weight. One case after the other. The struggle for concentration is...

The role of Oral Roberts is not one I should have consciously chosen, all matters being equal. But everywhere around us others astonished themselves with an eerie precision. Brenda's first case, a boy with a detached retina, was her best. She had visualized his brow. In the case of the woman with emphysema, I had experienced a tangible constriction of the chest. I could not cease marveling at the mathematical odds against pinpointing the mended hip.

That night, graduating, I tried to assess the journey's meaning. Mary and Frank and many of us would go on, possibly in "cottage groups," a recent fixture of the metropolitan scene. I had begun, wary of fraud, and had metamorphosed into...? Beta couldn't designate it. Mind Control as Chris Jensen had promised, was a fascinating human experience that couldn't be encapsulated in a formula sentence. At the least the participants received training in how to relax—a capacity not lightly dismissed—and several had located latent capacities that were astonishing to them.

I looked at Brenda and she smiled and I felt we had come a long way.

(Reprinted by permission from Boston Globe. Sunday. August 20. 1972.)