

## B O O K R E V I E W

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*Effective Self Hypnosis:  
Pathways to the Unconscious*

by C. Alexander Simpkins, Ph.D., &amp; Annellen M. Simpkins, Ph. D.

Radiant Dolphin Press, San Diego, CA

Book and Tape set

*Effective Self Hypnosis* is a combination book and audiotape set, co-written and presented by experienced and skilled practitioners. They have utilized a logical and well thought out framework to bring readers a resource that will enhance both understandings and skills.

Directed to a wide audience, the book is written "for professionals who are interested in helping themselves or their clients, using some hypnosis facilitation, and for the person who is interested in developing skills in self-hypnosis to bring about changes" (p. ix). It is unusual that any book can meaningfully appeal to such a broad audience, but the Simpkins have accomplished this. They do, however, appropriately remind readers that many problems require the clinical expertise of a professional.

Like the book, the tape presents a sequential progression of information intertwined with well-crafted experiential exercises. The well-integrated building blocks bring together conscious awareness and understanding with that which is not so easily understood consciously.

Each chapter begins with a thought-provoking quotation that fits well into the chapter content. "Truth refines but does not obscure" (p. vii) attributed to Nathaniel Stone Simpkins (1836) is one such delight. Sprinkled throughout are illustrations, which also evoke imagination.

The simple, straightforward information is presented in ways that let the novice recognize the powerful potential of hypnosis. One of the unique strengths of the audio portion is the careful way in which they demonstrate that neither eloquence nor complexity are needed to develop strong and effective hypnotic responses. Paradoxically, this in itself is eloquent and complex.

The book is particularly useful in understanding the context of hypnosis practiced in the United States. It provides an overview of the modern history of hypnosis along with a brief "who's who," which is useful in gaining a perspective on some of the central debates among modern researchers and practitioners. These include the state/ nonstate debate and the universal potential / trait argument.

Overlying the simple straightforward presentation is a depth of wisdom that subtly glimmers. The organized structure makes the book a fundamental tool to promote the self-development of both the therapist and the lay reader. This is neither a stand-alone manual nor a recipe book; it serves as compass for a serious student.

*Effective Self Hypnosis* helps each of us "...to voluntarily do the involuntary, to deliberately be spontaneous and to regain rapport with your own inner self" (p. vii).

**Reviewed by:**

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