

The Honest Hypnotist Guide

Unmasking the AuDHD Way

Doc Strange

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This is a work of memoir. It reflects the author's recollection of events. Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals who did not consent to appearing in this book.

First Edition, 2026

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Dedication

To James Szeles and the whole hypnosis family, not about you, about how you showed up when it mattered.

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Acknowledgements

To Adrian, my brother. To Victoria, my sister. To Marcus, my brother. To my mum. To my dad. For helping me when they could.

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A Note on How This Book Works

Every chapter in this book runs on four layers, always in the same order.

Layer 1: The Story is the anecdote, told plainly, the way you'd hear it if we were talking.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext rereads the same story through the lens I didn't have when I lived it, or when I first wrote about it twelve years ago.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail is for working hypnotists and performers, practical, technical, no metaphor required.

TL;DR is the whole chapter in a dozen lines, for anyone in a hurry, or anyone who wants the bones before the flesh.

Read it in order, or read it in layers, straight through every chapter's Layer 1 first and circle back for the rest. Both work. That's rather the point of the book.

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Prologue: They Thought They Were Writing Complaints

These are real. Blue biro. Lancashire Education Committee, District 10.

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They wrote it down.

All of it. In handwriting. In blue biro. They filed it, stamped it, signed it, posted it home.

They thought they were writing complaints.

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"He demands more attention than can be met in the normal classroom situation." — Biology, Pleckgate School, 1979

"Criticism pours off him like water off a duck's back." — History, Pleckgate School, 1979

"Very silly. Christian has to be the centre of attention all the time." — Physics, Pleckgate School, 1979

"Despite wasting his time in class and doing very little homework, Christian got quite a good exam result." — Chemistry, Pleckgate School, 1979

"Christian is invariably preoccupied with something which has little, if anything, to do with the actual lesson." — English, Pleckgate School, 1979

"He is constantly daydreaming." — Mathematics, Pleckgate School, 1981

"It often takes him so long at the beginning of a lesson to organise his work that he misses instructions, information etc, and then can't proceed." — Geography, Pleckgate School, 1981

"An unhappy child." — English, Pleckgate School, 1981

"I am amazed by how little work he can produce in an hour." — Technical Drawing, Pleckgate School, 1980

"It seems impossible for him ever to arrive anywhere on time." — House Tutor, Pleckgate School, 1980

"Christian will hit the heights or the depths." — Mr A. Gillan, Headteacher, Roe Lee Park Primary

"He must try... not to attract attention by precocious behaviour, wisecracks or tricks and jokes." — Mr A. Gillan, Headteacher's

Leaving Letter

"This really is disappointing Christian; I hope you will eventually do some justice to yourself." — J.K. Walmsley, Principal, Pleckgate School, 1981

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He did not stop.

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Chapter 1: Very Silly and Centre of Attention

Layer 1: The Story

Not long ago I was on my knees in a back alley, talking to the floor.

Three snails, all on their backs, all blowing bubbles. Blowing bubbles is a distress signal, in case you didn't know. Snails don't have a lot of ways to tell you things are going badly, but that's one of them. Two of them were dead. The third was playing dead, which is a strategy I have personally used at several gigs.

I picked the survivor up, put it on a leaf, and talked to it for a little while. Slowly, it came out of its shell. Then it had to push past its two dead friends and go hide, which is about the bleakest commute I've ever witnessed. If anybody had walked past me, they'd have seen this guy on his knees talking to the floor.

Here's the thing. That guy on his knees in the alley is not a new development. He's the original model. Everything else, the stage, the suits, the shows, got bolted on later.

Go back far enough and you find a kid whose school reports all said versions of the same two things: very silly, and centre of attention. Couldn't sit still. Couldn't stop performing. Couldn't read the room, according to every adult in it. Which was funny, because I was reading every room, all the time, in detail that would have frightened them. I just wasn't reading it on the channel they were broadcasting on.

I mean channels literally, as it happens. Doc Strange was a CB radio handle. That's where it started. Not on a stage. On a CB radio, as a kid, doing voices, imitating people, making strangers laugh through a box. Nobody could see me. Nobody knew how old I was, what I looked like, whether I was fidgeting or staring at the ceiling while I talked. All they got was the voice. And the voice could hold a room it couldn't even see.

There was an unwritten rule on CB back then. If you see an aerial, you knock. In Johannesburg in 1980, twelve years old, I saw a house with a huge antenna setup and I knocked on the door. The man who answered was a radio ham, and he told me, quite reasonably, that I'd turned up unannounced and should come back tomorrow. So I came back. He looked at me and said, "I didn't think you'd come back."

His name, and I promise you this is not a handle, was Sherlock Holmes. Real name. He had a kilowatt rig, which to a twelve year old with a CB set is roughly what a rocket is to a kid with a paper aeroplane. He said, "you shouldn't really be using a radio amateur's equipment... but I'm not looking," and left the room for ten minutes.

In those ten minutes, a half-blind kid in Johannesburg reached a mate in Blackburn, England, faintly, and picked up a station in Newfoundland,

Canada, clear as anything. "Ten-five, and it, over." I have done a lot of shows since then. I have stood on stages with hundreds of people waiting to see what happens next. I'm not sure anything has ever topped those ten minutes.

Meanwhile, back on planet playground, things were less magical. I was half-blind, weedy, and bullied. Running away was hard when you're half-blind and uncoordinated. Fighting was worse when you're weedy. So I found a third option. I taught myself hypnosis. Not from a class. From watching, trying, failing, and trying again, with one specific and urgent application in mind: talking bullies out of thumping me.

I learned hypnosis to stop bullies hitting me. It didn't always work. But it worked often enough that I kept going.

Years later I opened the first version of this book with the line: "Any Idiot can be a hypnotist. Look at me." I stand by it. What I didn't understand in 2014 was why this particular idiot had needed to become one so young, and why it came so naturally. That's what this edition is for.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

Nobody said AuDHD in 1980. They said very silly. They said centre of attention. They said he'd calm down if he wanted to.

Here's what was actually happening, named plainly. The kid who couldn't sit still had a nervous system that idles at revs most people only hit in an emergency. The kid who couldn't stop performing had

discovered that performance is a script, and scripts are learnable, and a learned script is a lot safer than improvising a personality in real time. The kid who couldn't read the room was taking in every flicker of it, every shift in tone, every micro-change in who was about to turn on whom. He wasn't missing the signal. He was drowning in it, and the bits he surfaced with weren't the bits the teachers wanted.

Look at what I actually gravitated to. CB radio is social contact with everything my brain found expensive stripped out. No eye contact. No body language to decode while also producing my own. No guessing when it's my turn, because the medium enforces turn-taking for you. Just voice, pattern, timing, play. An undiagnosed autistic ADHD kid found the one social technology on Earth designed, by accident, for exactly his brain. And on that channel, he wasn't the weird kid. He was the entertainment.

The playground hypnosis was the same discovery in hostile territory. I couldn't wing it socially, so I studied it like radio. What do people respond to. What tone slows someone down. What words redirect someone who has already decided to hurt you. Other kids absorbed this stuff without noticing. I had to reverse engineer it, consciously, from the outside. That's masking, before I had the word. It's also, and this is the joke at the centre of my whole life, the entire technical basis of hypnosis.

And the snails belong here, not just at the start. When I told this story back to someone later, I said: "Yes, the snails, because it says who I am and the type of person I've become. Once upon a time, I would have

walked past the snails, and I would have ignored them, because they're just snails. But they're not just snails. I connected my network to that snail's network... We all have to start taking just a little bit of time to attempt to try and see through someone else's window."

That's the channel I was on the whole time. A distress signal is a distress signal, whether it's bubbles from a snail or a wobble in a stranger's voice on 27 megahertz. I could always receive it. It took me forty years and a diagnosis to understand why receiving it cost me so much, and why it was worth it anyway.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

For the working hypnotists. Strip out my biography and this chapter is about three technical foundations that predate any induction you'll ever learn.

- **Voice carries state on its own.** The CB kid held rooms he couldn't see, with no eye fixation, no passes, no stagecraft. Pace, pitch, rhythm and silence do most of the work of an induction. If your induction collapses without eye contact and lighting, you're leaning on props. Practise inducing through a closed door, or record yourself and listen with your eyes shut.

- **De-escalation is pacing and leading under pressure.** Talking a bully out of a thumping is the rawest form of it: match their energy and posture first, earn the tiny agreement, then lead the tone down one

notch at a time. On stage the same mechanism handles hecklers, nervous volunteers, and the subject who freezes.

- **The snail is your abreaction protocol.** A distressed subject is a snail on its back, blowing bubbles. You do not yank them out of the shell. You put them somewhere safe, lower your voice, keep talking, and wait. Your job is the leaf and the patience, not the rescue drama.

- **On reading the room.** Room-reading is a channel, and channels can be tuned. Before every show, spend two minutes receiving only: who's leaning in, who's arms-crossed, who laughs first. Your volunteer selection is happening in those two minutes.

TL;DR

Man kneels in alley, saves snail, talks to floor. Same kid he always was. School said: very silly, centre of attention, can't read the room. Truth: reading every room, on a different channel. Doc Strange started as a CB handle. Voice in a box, holding rooms he couldn't see. Johannesburg, age 12, a real man named Sherlock Holmes, ten minutes on a kilowatt rig, Blackburn faint, Newfoundland clear. Best show of my life. Learned hypnosis to stop bullies hitting me. Didn't always work. Worked often enough. Every skill since is the same skill in different clothes: receive the signal, answer it kindly. Any idiot can be a hypnotist. Look at me.

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Chapter 2: Any Idiot Can Be A Hypnotist

Layer 1: The Story

Corfu, 1992. I was travelling through Europe with a big rucksack on my back, busking in the streets to make money. Juggling, miming, doing robotics, magic in bars, whatever kept the drachmas coming. By the time I got to Corfu they mostly weren't coming. I was seriously skint. Crap busker, in fairness to the buskers who weren't.

I'd lived on the island for a few months back in 1989 and wanted to see it again, and I'd been spending my evenings in youth hostels hypnotising fellow travellers, one at a time, because that was all I'd ever done. One person. Never a show. Then I met the owner of a campsite and asked if there was any chance of work in exchange for somewhere to sleep. He asked what I could do.

And without thinking, I said, "I am a hypnotist."

He didn't quite understand, so I counted to three, clicked my fingers and closed my eyes. That did it. He got all excited. He had a site full of holidaymakers and travellers and no entertainment, and here was

entertainment standing in front of him asking for a tent. The deal: do a show for him and I'd get a tent, food and drink, plus his blessing to go round the other bars and hotels finding paid work. If the show was good, I could do one a week on those terms. A good deal. One small problem. I wasn't remotely prepared to do a show.

Except I sort of was, because of a man called Jay Louis.

Earlier that year I'd been working at a resort in L'Estartit, in Catalonia, where Jay was the stage hypnotist. He did a great show in six languages, which made it a bit long winded to be sure, but it worked. I watched him a few times, then got up the nerve to ask him about becoming a stage hypnotist myself. Jay had watched me too, countless times, entertaining the kids and the mums and dads with my idea of comedy, and he said I'd make a very good hypnotist. We talked about what I knew and what I'd tried, and he said the sentence that changed everything: "All you need is an act. If you know what you are going to say and what you are going to do, the rest is easy."

I told him I couldn't be sure how to get enough volunteers up, or what to do with them when I did. So Jay gave me his act. Seriously. He said, "Do what I do, just don't do it around here." He let me study everything, answered every question, and by the time I left I had a good working knowledge of a full stage show, in six languages. I'd forgotten the other five languages by Corfu, but I had a tape recording of his show, and when I agreed to perform that Sunday evening, I went back to my tent, put the tape in my Sony Walkman, and made notes about what I would

do that night. It was the kick up the arse I needed. Like Nike says, just do it.

Sunday night came. A very good crowd. Kiwis, Aussies, Dutch, Germans, French, Brits. I started the show and got eight volunteers, and then began making the first of quite a few mistakes, some of them borrowed from Jay's act, no disrespect intended, that I'd soon learn were not my style at all.

Where do I start. I sat my volunteers on the only stools available, which were bar stools. Bar stools. I was lucky nobody fell off and cracked their head open. Within no time at all I had six great subjects who were out cold, and everyone was impressed, none more so than me. I had to physically contain my excitement, because on the outside I was a hypnotist and on the inside I was a man screaming it's working, it's actually working.

Then came the routines. I had volunteers drink raw eggs believing they were tasty cocktails, right up until I learned about salmonella and dropped it. I told a man a raw onion was a tasty apple, right up until he told me he had an ulcer and his guts were on fire after the show. I did the catalepsy bridge, a man stiff as a plank across two bar stools, and then I stood on him. I soon realised that wasn't a good idea either.

Every one of those mistakes was the education. By the time I reached the UK, I had a whole new act, built out of everything Corfu had taught me not to do. And I had learned the thing this book has repeated ever since, in every edition, because it's still true: the only secret to hypnosis is that there is no secret to hypnosis. First, you must tell yourself, I am a

hypnotist. Then you must tell others, I am a hypnotist. You must believe what you say, because it is true. I said it to a campsite owner before I'd ever done a show, and by the end of Sunday night, it was true.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

Read that story again through the right glasses and two things jump out.

First: Jay Louis gave me his act because he liked how I watched. He'd seen me around the resort for weeks, and what he saw was someone absorbing everything. That's the bit nobody names. AuDHD people learn by observation in a way that looks casual and isn't. It's obsessive, complete, and mostly invisible. I didn't sit there with a notepad while Jay performed. I didn't need to. The show went in whole, structure and timing and phrasing, the way a song goes in. Months later, in a tent in Corfu, I rebuilt an entire six-language stage show from a cassette tape and memory in one afternoon. Neurotypical people call that a gift. It's not a gift. It's the default setting on a brain that never learned how to watch anything casually.

Second: "I am a hypnotist" came out of my mouth without thinking, and it worked, and I want you to notice why. My whole childhood, improvising a personality in real time had gone badly. Scripts went well. And "I am a hypnotist" is the shortest script in the world. Three words, and suddenly I knew who I was in the conversation, what I was for, what came next. Count to three, click, eyes closed. The campsite owner wasn't just sold on hypnosis. I was. That sentence gave me a self I could operate from, on demand, in any country, in any language I

could still remember. Other people got a hypnotist. I got a load-bearing identity.

That's why the maxim in the original book was always slightly stranger than it looked. Tell yourself. Then tell others. Believe it, because it is true. I wrote that as a hypnosis technique, and it is one. But it's also a precise description of how an undiagnosed AuDHD man builds a person to be. You declare it, you script it, and you inhabit it until the seams stop showing. I taught thousands of readers to do on purpose what my brain had been doing for survival since the playground.

And the mistakes? The bar stools, the eggs, the onion, standing on the human bridge? That's what happens when you run someone else's script with total fidelity and no filter. I performed Jay's act the way I'd absorbed it, completely, including the parts that were wrong for me, because editing while executing wasn't something I could do yet. The audience taught me the edits, one flaming ulcer at a time. That's how I've learned everything. Absorb it whole, run it, keep what survives contact with reality.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

For the working hypnotists, Corfu is a checklist of what your first show will try to do to you, and how to let it teach you instead of end you.

- **Get an act before you get a stage.** Jay Louis was right and I've never heard it said better: if you know what you are going to say and what you are going to do, the rest is easy. Inductions are maybe ten percent

of a show. The act, the sequence of routines and the words between them, is the other ninety. Write yours down before you need it.

- **Seating is a safety decision, not furniture.** Bar stools nearly bought me a lawsuit before I'd earned a fee. Somnambulists slump, slide and topple. Solid chairs, with backs, on level ground, spaced so nobody clips a neighbour on the way down. Walk the stage before the audience arrives.

- **Audit every routine for what the volunteer can't tell you.** The onion man didn't know his ulcer was relevant until his guts were on fire. Raw eggs were a laugh until salmonella. Rule: nothing goes in a mouth, nothing bears weight, nothing relies on a volunteer's undisclosed health. If a routine's comedy depends on risk, the routine is the risk.

- **The full-body catalepsy bridge is a demonstration of ego, not skill.** Standing on a rigid volunteer impresses exactly one person in the room, and it's you. Drop it. The audience laughs harder at a man convinced his shoe is ringing than at a man being used as scaffolding.

- **Steal structure, not style.** A borrowed act gets you on stage. Your own act keeps you there. Track which moments feel like wearing someone else's shoes, because the audience can see them on your feet. I landed in the UK with a completely different act than the one I left Corfu with, and that was the point.

- **The declaration is the induction of the hypnotist.** "I am a hypnotist," said out loud, to yourself and then to others, is not

marketing. It sets your tonality, your posture, your certainty, and the audience reads all three before you've said anything else. Believe what you say, because it is true.

TL;DR

Corfu, 1992. Seriously skint. Crap busker. Campsite owner asks what I can do. "I am a hypnotist." Three words, no show ever done. Jay Louis gave me his act in Catalonia. "Do what I do, just don't do it around here." Rebuilt his six-language show from a Walkman tape, in a tent, in an afternoon. Sunday night: eight volunteers, six out cold, on bar stools. Lucky nobody died. Raw eggs, raw onion, ulcer man, standing on a human bridge. Every mistake was the syllabus. Reached the UK with a brand new act made entirely of lessons. The only secret to hypnosis is that there is no secret to hypnosis. Tell yourself. Tell others. Believe it, because it is true.

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Chapter 3: Playing by the Wrong Rules

Layer 1: The Story

Before the internet told everyone what everything was worth, there was a window. Most people didn't know the window existed. I lived in it.

Picture me walking into Cash Converters. On the shelf, amateur radios and CBs, priced by someone who had no way to look up what they were actually worth, because there was no internet to look it up on. But I knew. Of course I knew. Radios were the thing my brain had been quietly cataloguing since Johannesburg. Makes, models, what hams wanted, what was rare, what was rubbish. To the man behind the counter it was a dusty box with knobs on. To me it was a mispriced asset with a callsign.

I bought a radio for eighty quid and sold it for three hundred and seventy plus postage. Pretty much the same week.

This wasn't a phase I grew into. It started when I was a teenager with no money at all, which is the purest form of the game, because when you have no money you learn to trade. Barter, part exchange, swap up, swap

sideways, swap up again. I'd end up with so much stuff. Big radios I couldn't afford by any normal route, sitting on my desk anyway. A President Madison with a Jumbo on top of it. An International Jumbo. A microphone worth more than everything else I owned. And I was fifteen.

And it wasn't just buying and selling boxes. I'd get to someone's house, they'd meet me, they'd feed me, and then I fixed her CB up. That was the model, though I didn't know it was a model. Turn up, be useful, be fed, fix the thing, everyone leaves happier. People didn't just get a working radio. They got a visit. Decades later I'd offer businesses essentially the same deal in a different costume, fly me there and look after me and I'll sort it, and think I'd invented something. I hadn't. Fifteen year old me invented it, in somebody's front room, with a soldering iron and a plate of sandwiches.

The boot sales were the same window, wider. For years, boot sales were a landscape where things were worth what the seller reckoned on a foggy Sunday morning, and what the seller reckoned was frequently, gloriously wrong. Then David Dickinson came about with his bargain hunt program on television, and all of a sudden everybody thought they were an expert. The window closed. Not because the knowledge spread, exactly. Because the belief in having knowledge spread, which is a different and much more annoying thing. The golden age ended not when people got smart, but when they got confident.

You've already met the other end of this timeline. This is the same man who was travelling Europe with a rucksack, busking, juggling, miming,

doing robotics, magic in bars, and still ending up seriously skint in Corfu. That's the joke of it. I could turn eighty quid into three hundred and seventy in a week, and I could also stand in a street doing everything I knew and barely cover dinner. The skill was never money. The skill was noticing, and noticing pays out in some arenas and not others.

Where it paid out, eventually, was online. When selling moved to the internet I moved with it, early, back when most people didn't know what to do with an online auction. And over the years the noticing compounded into something you can actually count: the chrispteamagician eBay account collected 665 five-star reviews, and GlowGadgets collected roughly two and a half thousand. Thousands of parcels, thousands of strangers, thousands of small promises kept. That's what the window turned into when it grew up. Not a hustle. A reputation.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

People hear the Cash Converters story and think: cunning. Sharp operator. Wheeler dealer. They're wrong, and the difference matters, because the wrong version makes it a character trait and the right version makes it a neurotype.

I didn't plan to be ahead of the internet. I didn't do research, the way people mean research. I had simply absorbed, involuntarily and completely, an entire domain of value that most people had no reason to carry around. What a President Madison was. What it went for. Who

wanted one. That data was in my head for the same reason snail distress signals were in my head: my brain hoovers up whole systems whether or not anyone asked it to. When I walked past that shelf, I wasn't calculating. The wrongness of the price was just visible, the way a snail on its back is visible. Everyone else walked past both.

That's what I mean when I say it's the same noticing. Three snails upside down in an alley and an eighty quid radio worth three seventy are the same class of event: a signal broadcasting on a channel most people have never tuned. The only difference is what the signal is attached to. Aim the noticing at small dying things and people call you soft. Aim it at objects and people call you shrewd. It's one aerial.

Here's the part I want the undiagnosed readers to sit with. This ability came bundled with everything that made school report me as very silly. The hyperabsorption that priced radios is the same trait that made me unable to half-listen to anything, ever, which is exhausting in every room that expects half-listening. The pattern-lock that spotted arbitrage is the same lock that wouldn't release when a teacher wanted me to drop a topic. You don't get the noticing without the cost of the noticing. For forty years I thought I had a bag of unrelated quirks, some profitable, most punishable. The diagnosis showed me it was one machine, running one program, in rooms that only sometimes wanted that program run.

And notice what my body did with the profits, even at fifteen. I didn't stack cash. I stacked radios and visits. I turned value into a desk full of gear I loved and afternoons in strangers' houses being fed and being

useful. An AuDHD kid, given his first surplus, spent it on special interest and structured social contact. If that's cunning, it's the worst cunning ever devised. It was never about the money. It was about the pattern, and the pattern was: notice, connect, be useful, belong for an afternoon.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

For the working hypnotists. You may be wondering what a chapter about radios and boot sales is doing in a stage hypnosis book. Everything, is the answer, because most hypnotists don't fail on stage. They fail everywhere around it.

- **The noticing is your volunteer selection, industrialised.** Spotting a mispriced radio and spotting your best subject in row three are the same act: reading value signals other people walk past. Train it off-stage. Practise pricing rooms, queues, audiences. Who's responsive, who's performing scepticism, who's desperate to be chosen. The read gets faster with reps, and the reps are free.

- **Know what you're worth before someone else prices you.** The Cash Converters shelf works both ways. An entertainer who doesn't know his market rate is the eighty quid radio. Research what your show sells for in your market, then hold the number. The buyer with no information will happily price you wrong, and it won't be wrong in your favour.

- **The house-call model outearns the stage in the long run.** They'd meet me, they'd feed me, and then I fixed her CB up. Turn up, be

looked after, solve the thing, leave everyone happier. As a working performer that translates directly: the gigs where you're a guest who happens to perform rebook forever. The gigs where you're a supplier get compared on price.

- **Watch for your industry's David Dickinson moment.** Every golden age ends the same way: not when the audience gets knowledgeable, but when they get confident. When television, or the internet, or a viral clip convinces every booker they're an expert on hypnosis, the market changes overnight. You survive it the way I survived boot sales dying: move early to the next channel and take your reputation with you.

- **Reputation is compound interest on kept promises.** 665 five-star reviews on one account, two and a half thousand on another. None of them came from brilliance. They came from thousands of small transactions completed as described. Your show is one transaction. Your career is the review history. Protect it like it's the act, because it is.

TL;DR

Cash Converters priced radios blind. I could see. Eighty quid in, three seventy out, same week. Fifteen years old, no money, trading up. A President Madison with a Jumbo on top, on my desk. They'd meet me, they'd feed me, I'd fix her CB. The house-call model, invented in a front room. Boot sale golden age died when David Dickinson made everyone confident, not clever. Same brain that saw the snails saw the prices. One aerial, different signals. Not cunning. Hyperabsorption of value nobody else carries around. The window grew up into 665 five-star reviews on

one account, two and a half thousand on another. Notice, connect, be useful, belong for an afternoon. Money was never the point. It was the scoreboard.

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Chapter 4: A Pattern of Limelight Stealing

Layer 1: The Story

Bristol, October 2019. I was in my fifties, nearly thirty years a professional entertainer, and a member of a magic society. Hobbyist magic clubs are lovely places, mostly. Retired teachers, IT blokes, a card man or two who can genuinely play. Once a month a visiting lecturer comes in, a proper working pro, and everyone sits in rows in a hired room and watches, and the unspoken rule is that the lecturer is the show and you are the audience. I want you to hold on to the word unspoken, because it's doing all the work in this chapter.

There had already been one incident, a different lecture, months earlier. The visiting lecturer that night was a proper working pro, streets better than me, the kind of good that makes the gap between you and him the whole point of a joke. So when he finished to the usual round of applause, I stood up, dead straight face, and said, "he's stolen my act," and marched out across the performing area and through the door before anyone could clock it as a bit.

It's an absurd claim on its face, and that was rather the point. I've watched proper magicians and hypnotists my whole career and never once seriously thought one of them had lifted material off me, because I know exactly how good the good ones are and where I sit next to them. Claiming he'd stolen my act was the joke, the equivalent of a two-foot toddler telling you he could take a cage fighter apart. The laugh, if it landed, was meant to be at my own expense, not his.

Except I do everything deadpan. Always have. I never laugh at my own material, and I've never trusted a comedian who keeps checking in with the room to see if they're allowed to carry on, because that's not confidence, it's an apology with a microphone. Flat delivery, no wink, no follow-up line to say obviously joking. Which means the room, and later the Council, had no way of telling a straight-faced bit from a straight-faced strop. To them it just looked like a man storming out in a genuine huff.

General chat in that room runs on banter, before the lecture and after it. Near-the-knuckle lines, nobody precious about it, that's just how those evenings have always worked. Worth holding onto for what comes next.

Then came the photo night. Another visiting lecturer, and I was taking photos of him for the benefit of the club, which I want on the record was a helpful thing to be doing. He posed for one and made a comment, and I said, "I'll Photoshop that later." Laughter. He said, "I'm not going to ask you what you'll do with it!" And quick as a flash, I said, "I'll w*nk over it."

Lots of laughter. The lecturer himself came straight back with a gag about "fingering flaps," which I mention because it matters later that the professional in the room was playing too. In the moment it was a win. Two comics trading, room roaring, job done. I drove home happy.

A fortnight later there was a club auction night I couldn't make, because I'd been up in Lancashire and we got home late. The next day, an email from the Honorary Secretary. There had been a complaint from a member. The President had wanted to speak to me at the auction, to make clear the Council's views on the incident and how members are expected to behave at meetings. Since I hadn't come, a letter would now be posted to me instead.

And here is where I did the thing I have done all my life. I wrote back. I asked who had complained and why nothing was said on the night, because I would have apologised there and then. And then, to help, I wrote out the entire exchange. Word for word. With stage directions. "Sound of laughter." "Lots of laughter." I transcribed the joke that was the subject of a formal complaint, in writing, to the man handling the complaint, as evidence for the defence, because in my head it was obvious that if he could just see the whole sequence he would see that it worked. I finished with "I know, childish," asked him to pass on my sincere apology to whoever I'd offended so badly, said I felt terrible, and signed it Magically Yours.

His reply was long and it was fair, which made it worse. He'd been embarrassed when I said it, and he knew others had been. A Society elder, a past President who rarely got to meetings any more, was there

with his wife, and she was sitting directly behind me. The club's youngest member, sixteen years old, was in the room. Another member had gone and found the elder in the car park afterwards to apologise on the club's behalf, because he felt someone should. And then the Secretary brought up the walkout, the "he's stolen my act" night, and joined the dots with a sentence I have never been able to put down since: "It seems to be a pattern of 'limelight stealing' which you fall into especially in front of lecturers for some reason."

I wrote back three lines. "Super, thanks for the info. I too look forward to it all being put behind us. Life is far too short and not so trivial." Magically Yours, again.

The Official Warning arrived by post a few days later. A written formal warning about my behaviour, from a magic club, to a man who had been holding rooms professionally since before some of the members owned a deck of cards. I never did find out who complained. I still can't read that thread without my ears going hot.

Years later, at a boot sale of all places, I ran into the man who'd been President that year, the one who never actually spoke to me about any of it at the time. He told me straight, unprompted, that it had nothing to do with him. The letter got written and put in front of him, and he signed it, because he hadn't even been in the room that evening and didn't really know what it was about. And the two people pushing hardest for a formal warning were, in his words, the two who'd never liked me the whole time I'd been a member.

That reframes the thing and it doesn't, both at once. The Council's grave concern wasn't quite the united front the letter implied, it was two people with an existing grudge and a President willing to sign off on their say-so. It also doesn't erase what actually happened in that room, the walkout, the joke, the reply that dug the hole deeper. Institutions are very good at laundering two people's dislike into a neutral-sounding process. I don't think that's unique to magic clubs.

And the phrase that stays isn't the warning, or the pattern, or even the wife sitting behind me. It's "for some reason." Because the Secretary didn't know the reason, and neither, it turns out, did the man who signed the letter. At the time, neither did I.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

Read it again through the right glasses.

Start with my own words in that apology: quick as a flash. That's not a boast, it's a symptom description. The lecturer fed me a set-up, an actual set-up, "I'm not going to ask you what you'll do with it," and my brain completed the pattern before any filter got a vote. On stage, that speed is the job. It's what I'm paid for. Off stage it's the same machine running with nobody on the door, and the machine does not know the difference between a gig and a hired room on a Tuesday. There was a mic-shaped situation, so I did a mic-shaped thing.

Now look at what I measured and what I missed. I collected the laughter, because laughter is loud, immediate, countable. It's the one

signal my nervous system reads perfectly. What I didn't collect was the elder's wife behind me, the sixteen-year-old across the room, the Secretary going red. Reading those means modelling the silent people, guessing at discomfort that makes no sound, and that is precisely the instrument I was never issued. I wasn't ignoring the room's temperature. I genuinely could not feel it until the email arrived a fortnight later, which is roughly my average latency on social pain. Everyone else got it live. I got it in the post.

The walkout is the same misreading from a different angle, just inverted. That one wasn't a loss of control, it was a bit, built and delivered on purpose, a joke about how far out of that lecturer's league I was. But I have never once laughed at my own material, and I distrust comedians who keep checking with the room instead of just running the set, so everything I do lands completely flat. No lean, no wink, no half-smile to flag the joke as a joke. For most comedians that flatness is a switch. For me it's closer to a setting. And a joke with no visible seam where the joke starts is indistinguishable, from the outside, from the real thing. The room couldn't hear the irony because there was nothing in my face or my voice carrying it. They just saw a man shout something and storm out, and filed it exactly where it looked like it belonged, under limelight stealing. From their seats, why wouldn't they.

And the apology. Oh, the apology. Re-performing the offending joke in writing, with audience reactions annotated, to the complaint handler, is the most AuDHD document I have ever produced. Anxiety hits and I overshare, because somewhere in me lives an unshakeable belief that context is exculpatory. If they had all the information they'd understand,

so give them all the information. That instinct has dug every hole I've ever stood in. And when the fair, patient reply came back, the mask slammed shut and produced three lines of flat pleasantries over the top of the shame. Super, thanks for the info. That's not peace. That's a shutdown wearing a bow tie.

The Secretary wrote "for some reason" because he couldn't name it. It took me until my fifties and a diagnosis to name it myself. Naming it doesn't unsend the email, and it doesn't cool my ears. But it does move the file. What the Council recorded as a character fault, I can now read as a wiring diagram. The warning letter and my old school reports were written forty years apart by different people in different rooms, and they describe the same boy. It also took a chance conversation at a boot sale, years on, to learn that "the Council's concern" was mostly two people who'd never liked me, wearing a letterhead. Naming my own wiring doesn't undo that either. It just means I've stopped assuming the whole room was ever the jury.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

For the working performers, Bristol is what happens when the stage skills leave the stage without supervision. Learn from mine.

- **Quick as a flash is a stage tool, not a personality setting.** The speed that makes you dangerous with a microphone makes you a formal complaint without one. Before the punchline fires, know which room you're in, because the punchline won't check for you.

- **Take a census before you take a liberty.** Laughter only tells you who's with you, never who isn't. Behind me that night: a Society elder's wife. Across the room: a sixteen-year-old. Count the quiet people before you gamble the loud ones.

- **Never re-perform the offence inside the apology.** An apology with a transcript attached is a second show for an audience that didn't enjoy the first one. Say sorry, say it short, and stop. Explaining why it was funny is not mitigation, it's an encore.

- **The mother test works offstage too.** My golden safety rule for volunteers has always been: don't ask them to do anything you wouldn't ask your own mother. Run club-room banter through the same filter. If the line fails the mother test, the line fails.

- **A club night is not a gig.** On stage there's an implied contract, people came to be played with. A hired room full of hobbyists has no such contract, and the visiting lecturer joining in your bit doesn't create one. You're a guest in someone else's front room. Behave like it.

- **The cheap laugh always invoices you later.** I used to tell volunteers, it's not about getting cheap laughs, I can get those myself. Bristol was me getting one myself. The laugh cost nothing on the night and arrived as an Official Warning by second class post.

- **If you leave a room loudly, you are now the show.** It didn't matter that "he's stolen my act" was an absurd bit built on the lecturer being streets better than me, not a genuine grievance. A dead straight face and a march across the performing area reads as a real strop to anyone who

doesn't already know your delivery. Save the bit for a room that's been told you're deadpan, and put real grievances outside, later, quietly, or into an email you sleep on first.

TL;DR

Bristol, October 2019. A magic society, a lecture night, a camera in my hand to help the club. The lecturer poses. "I'll Photoshop that later." "I'm not going to ask what you'll do with it!" Quick as a flash: the worst possible answer. Lots of laughter. The only data I collected. An elder's wife sat directly behind me. A sixteen-year-old across the room. Not collected. Months earlier: a lecturer streets better than me, and a dead straight-faced "he's stolen my act." A bit, not a grievance. Marched out before the room caught the joke. A complaint. My apology re-told the entire joke, in writing, with stage directions, to the complaint handler. "A pattern of limelight stealing which you fall into especially in front of lecturers for some reason." "Super, thanks for the info." The mask, closing. An Official Warning, by post, from a magic club, to a thirty-year professional. Years later, a boot sale: the President who signed it wasn't even in the room that night, and the two loudest complainers just never liked me. For some reason. It took a diagnosis in my fifties, and a chance conversation years after that, to fill in the reason.

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Chapter 5: Masking in a White Coat

Layer 1: The Story

At some point, the man who talked to snails decided he needed a reputation. And instead of growing one, he manufactured one. That's where Chris P Tee came from.

Understand the logic, because it was sound, as far as it went. Having a good reputation, right? If you want the family shows, the schools, the fetes, the bookings that pay the rent, you need to be the safe pair of hands. Smart. Presentable. Predictable. So I built him. Chris P Tee, the family-friendly entertainer, the polished act, the face that rooms full of parents could relax around. But that's where I kind of went wrong, because I overmasked. I tried to manufacture a reputation that I didn't really want. I built a man for other people's comfort and then had to live inside him at every gig.

The clearest record of this doesn't live in my memory. It lives in an application process, years ago now, and I can date the exact moment reputation became more important than authenticity, because it's practically written down in someone's filing system.

To join a certain famous magic organisation, you had to submit a performance video. You've got to look smart, and you had to do a certain length video. There was also the option of going to London in person, but I didn't want to go all the way to London, and I didn't realise then that I was autistic ADHD, and it makes sense now, doesn't it. The travel, the strange building, the panel of strangers, the day of unstructured social protocol. My whole body said no and I didn't have the vocabulary to explain why, so I sent the tape.

The first video was good. It was me, performing well, doing the actual work. It got turned down. The reasons: I was wearing trainers, and there was a crack in the video, a technical break in the recording. Not the magic. Not the performance. The footwear and the file. My reaction at the time was brief, heartfelt, and is not printable in the family edition of this book, but you can reconstruct it from context.

Then a second chance. This other chap was really kind to me, and he said, just send us another one. So I sent another one that wasn't as good, to be honest. But there was no break in it. And I had shoes on. And it was accepted.

Sit with that. The worse performance passed. Years later that episode is long closed, I hold no memberships anywhere and want none, but I keep the story, because you will rarely see the machinery of respectability photographed so clearly. The gate was never measuring the magic. The gate was measuring the costume and the continuity. And I learned the lesson the gate was actually teaching, which was: they don't need you to be better. They need you to look right.

Here's the map of me, so you know where Chris P Tee sits on it. There are three distances from myself. Chris P Tee is the furthest away: the highest masking, the costume, the family performer face built for rooms that needed something safe to look at. Chris P Taylor is closer, the civilian, but still performing without knowing it, still running scripts at the school gate and the bank counter. And Doc Strange, medicated, understood, unmasked, is zero distance. No mask left. The kid from the alley with the snails, the voice from the CB radio.

Doc Strange is the original. Chris P Tee was the adaptation.

I want to be fair to the adaptation, because it kept us fed for a very long time. Chris P Tee got the bookings. Chris P Tee walked into a thousand rooms that would never have booked the original, and left them happier. The mask worked. That was the problem. It worked so well that for years nobody, including me, thought to ask what it was costing the man underneath to wear it.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

Every late-diagnosed AuDHD person has a Magic Circle video. Not the actual organisation, I mean the shape of the story. Somewhere in your past there is a moment where the real thing you made was rejected for surface reasons, and a worse thing you made was accepted because the surface was right. And the lesson you took from it, silently, at machine speed, was: stop optimising the work, start optimising the appearance. That's the moment masking stops being a habit and becomes a policy.

Look at the anatomy of it. The first video was authentic output: real performance, real quality, trainers, because trainers are comfortable and I was there to do magic, not model footwear. The crack in the video was a technical flaw, the kind of detail my brain deprioritised because it wasn't the magic. And the gate said no. The second video was a masking artefact: engineered to pass inspection, quality sacrificed for compliance, shoes on. And the gate said yes. That's not an anecdote. That's a documented, filed, officiated experiment in what the world actually rewards, and I ran it on myself without knowing it was an experiment. The video was worse. The mask was better. The mask won.

And the London detail deserves its own paragraph, because it's the part I couldn't explain for decades. I didn't want to go all the way to London. Simple sentence. Lazy-sounding sentence. What it actually contained: an autistic ADHD nervous system doing an instant, accurate cost forecast of a day of travel, unfamiliar environments, unstructured social gauntlets and formal evaluation by strangers, and returning the answer no. I didn't have the diagnosis, so I didn't have the invoice. I just had the no, and the shame that came with a no I couldn't justify. It makes sense now. The forecast was right. It was always right. I just spent forty years being told my own weather reports were character flaws.

Here's the plain naming of what overmasking is, for the newly diagnosed. Masking is running a social interface layer on top of yourself: monitoring your face, your voice, your posture, your phrasing, in real time, against a model of what the room expects. It's expensive but survivable in doses. Overmasking is when the interface becomes a permanent installation. When you manufacture a reputation you didn't

really want, and then the bookings come in for the manufactured man, and now you're contractually obliged to be him. Every gig renewed the lease on the costume. The better Chris P Tee did, the less anyone, including me, ever met the person paying his running costs.

The costume was so good it fooled the wearer. That's the sentence I'd send back in time if I could. You are not the mask, and you are not lazy for finding the mask heavy, and the day you find out what you actually are, the invoice for all those years arrives at once. Mine did. We'll get to that.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

For the working hypnotists and performers. Persona is a tool of the trade. This chapter is not telling you to burn yours. It's telling you to know which way round you're wearing it.

- **Build the persona as costume, not as identity.** A stage persona should be something you put on in the dressing room and take off in the car. The test: can you describe your act in the third person without discomfort? If the persona has your bank account, your friendships and your self-image inside it, it's not a costume anymore. It's a residence.

- **Gatekeepers assess compliance signals, not craft. Plan accordingly.** The trainers and the crack in the tape sank a good performance. The shoes and the clean file passed a weaker one. When you submit to any gate, a booker, a showreel review, an agent, audit the surface layer with the same rigour you'd audit a routine: footwear,

framing, video continuity, sound, dress code. It offends the artist in you. Do it anyway, and know that's what you're doing, so the compliance never leaks into the craft.

- **Know your persona's distance from you, in numbers if it helps.**

Far, near, zero. The furthest persona is the most protective and the most expensive per hour of wear. Schedule accordingly: a high-mask persona plus a long drive plus an unfamiliar venue is a triple bill your nervous system pays for. If you're neurodivergent, this is not a metaphor. It's load management, and it decides whether you're still performing in ten years.

- **Respect what the adaptation earned.**

Whatever your Chris P Tee is called, it got you through rooms the original couldn't enter yet. Don't let the unmasking movement talk you into contempt for the thing that kept you fed. Decommission a mask with honours. Then check what's underneath, because that's the act you should have been selling all along.

- **The performance the gate rejects may be your best tape.**

Keep it. The first video, the real one, is the record of what you can actually do. Gates measure what gates measure. Your archive should measure the work.

TL;DR

Wanted a reputation. Manufactured one instead. That was Chris P Tee. Overmasked, by design. Famous magic organisation, years ago, closed

chapter. Video number one: good performance, trainers, a crack in the tape. Rejected. Video number two: worse performance, shoes on, no break. Accepted. The video was worse. The mask was better. The mask won. That's the whole mechanism, on file. Didn't want to go all the way to London. Didn't know I was autistic ADHD. Makes sense now. Three distances: Chris P Tee furthest, Chris P Taylor closer, Doc Strange zero. Doc Strange is the original. Chris P Tee was the adaptation. The costume was so good it fooled the wearer.

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Chapter 6: Kindness as a Rebellious Act

Layer 1: The Story

There's a line in my booking records that explains me better than any chapter of autobiography. Christmas Fayre, Great Tythe Barn, Tetbury. Charity show. Fee: zero pounds.

An accountant looks at that line and sees a mistake. I look at it and see the point.

Because scattered through those same records is a pattern, once you know to look for it. Sergeants' Mess functions for the military, booked at ordinary fixed rates when a corporate buyer would have paid premium money for the same hour. Preschools and schools, booked and rebooked at modest, consistent rates, year after year, when the same dates could have gone to whoever paid most. A corporate hypnosis booking with a note attached in my own hand: "I'll include a signed copy of my book to all who take part." Nobody asked for that. Nobody was going to pay extra for it. It went in the note anyway.

None of this was strategy. I want to be honest about that. For years I couldn't have told you why the free show felt more important than the paid one, why the school gig felt like the real work and the corporate gig felt like the invoice. I just knew that something was running underneath every booking that wasn't performance, and the fee was not a reliable way to measure it.

Here's a story with no stage in it at all. Years ago, I used to cold-call small businesses. Not to sell them anything. I'd been on their website, noticed a broken image, and I'd ring up just to tell them. "I noticed that your image hold is empty. I'd just let you know. You can pass it on to your web designer." Usually there was no web designer. Usually the bloke on the phone was the business, and the website, and the delivery driver. And you could hear it in his voice, that little recalibration: someone rang me up to help, for nothing. No pitch. No catch. Then I'd hang up and ring the next one.

Why did I do that? Because of my nana, partly. I got round to interviewing her, properly, with intent, too late. By the time I sat down to capture her, she'd forgotten everything. All those stories, gone, because I'd assumed there was time. What I took from that wasn't just record your elders, though, do record your elders. It was bigger: we need to let people leave breadcrumbs of kindness. Small deposits, made constantly, while there's still time to make them. A phone call about a broken image is a breadcrumb. A free show in a barn in Tetbury is a breadcrumb. A signed book in the hands of a volunteer who got up on stage and trusted a stranger is a breadcrumb.

And underneath all the breadcrumbs, there's an engine, and the engine is five words. It can't be for nothing.

I've been in so many people's houses. So many different countries and cities and villages. Met so many people. Been on so many stages. Seen so many different audiences, the ones that love you and the ones that want you dead. It can't be for nothing. That's not a slogan I wrote for a website. It's the thing that gets me off the floor. All that travel, all those rooms, all those faces, either they add up to something that outlives the applause, or they were just noise with a fee attached. I refuse the second option. I've refused it my whole life, mostly without knowing that's what the zero-pound bookings were: refusals.

One more thing the paid-only crowd never learns, because you can only learn it in the unpaid rooms. Sometimes the most broken people are the ones that bring you the most value. The volunteer nobody expected anything from who turns out to be the heart of the show. The audience member at the charity gig who tells you afterwards, quietly, what the evening actually meant. You don't meet those people at premium rates. They can't afford the premium rooms. If you only play where the money is, you spend your whole career performing for people who need you least.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

There's a myth, still doing the rounds, that autistic people lack empathy. I'd like to enter into evidence: a man on his knees in an alley over three

snails, a phone bill full of calls to strangers about broken images, and a booking sheet with zero-pound entries in it. The defence rests.

Here's what's actually true, named plainly. AuDHD empathy isn't absent. It's intermittent. It has a switch, and the switch is not under conscious control. Under overwhelm, the switch goes off, not because the caring stops but because the machinery that expresses caring is the first thing sacrificed when the system overloads. And then the right trigger walks past, a snail on its back, a wobble in a voice, an empty image frame on a stranger's website, and the switch slams on, explosively, all of it at once, and suddenly I'm rearranging my day around a mollusc. People who catch the off phase write you down as cold. People who catch the on phase write you down as too much. Nobody's watching long enough to see it's one system.

And here's what the masking years did with that system. The mask's job was to make me acceptable, and the explosive helping impulse was flagged, correctly, as unacceptable. Too intense. Too random. Too much. Neurotypical rooms have a dosage for kindness, and I never had the measuring spoon. So Chris P Tee learned to suppress the impulse along with everything else. Keep it professional. Don't ring strangers about their websites, that's weird. Don't do shows for nothing, that's mug behaviour. The mask didn't just hide the awkwardness. It hid the best thing in the building.

The diagnosis reversed the polarity of all of it. That's the part I want the newly diagnosed to hear, because it's the part nobody tells you. The assessment doesn't just explain your struggles. It re-files your

suppressions. The helping impulse I'd spent decades treating as a leak in the professional exterior turned out to be the feature, not the flaw. The zero-pound gigs weren't a business error. They were the original personality getting a hand free of the mask for one evening. Every breadcrumb I'd ever left, I'd left slightly ashamed, as if generosity without invoice was a symptom of not taking myself seriously. It was a symptom, all right. A symptom of the person under the costume, still alive, still transmitting.

So when I call kindness a rebellious act, I mean it precisely. It was rebellion against the mask I'd built myself. Every free show was the original model overriding the adaptation. The rebellion was right. It just took a diagnosis for the rebel to find out he'd been the legitimate government all along.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

For the working hypnotists, because I can hear some of you from here: lovely sentiment, Chris, but the van needs taxing. Correct. Here's the practitioner's case for the zero-pound line items.

- **Charity and community shows are your R&D lab.** New routines, new openings, new volunteer management, test them where the stakes are goodwill instead of a corporate contract. The Tetbury barn will forgive an experiment that a paying client would email you about. Every polished act you've ever admired was rough somewhere first. Free rooms are where.

- **Modest, consistent rates buy you the rarest thing in this business: repeat bookings.** The schools and preschools that rebook every year at a fair rate are worth more than the one-off premium gig, and not just financially. A base of recurring rooms means you're never desperate, and a hypnotist who isn't desperate negotiates, performs and selects volunteers better. Desperation reads from the back row.

- **Leave something physical behind.** A signed book to every volunteer costs you pennies against the fee and does two jobs: it thanks the people who took the actual risk, the ones who came up on stage, and it puts your name on a shelf in a house you've never been to. Volunteers are your ambassadors. Send them home equipped.

- **The give-first phone call is the best cold outreach ever devised, because it isn't outreach.** Notice something broken, tell them for free, ask for nothing, hang up. Some percentage will remember you forever. Do not track the percentage. The moment you track it, it's marketing, they can smell it, and the whole mechanism dies. Give first works precisely because it isn't a technique.

- **Book the rooms where the broken people are.** Sometimes the most broken people are the ones that bring you the most value, as subjects, as audiences, as the reason the job matters. Care homes, community halls, charity fayres. Your skills land hardest where entertainment is scarce. If your diary is all corporate, your act is only ever tested on people who are fine.

- **Audit your engine, not just your accounts.** Once a year, ask the five-word question of your own diary: it can't be for nothing, so what

was it for? If every line in the bookings sheet is explicable by fee alone, you're a supplier. The fee-shaped holes are where the career becomes a life.

TL;DR

Booking records: Christmas Fayre, Great Tythe Barn, Tetbury, charity, fee zero. That line is the point. Sergeants' Mess at fair rates. Schools rebooked for years at modest money. Signed books for every volunteer, unasked. Cold-called strangers to tell them their website image was broken. No pitch. No catch. Breadcrumbs. Interviewed my nana too late. She'd forgotten everything. Leave the breadcrumbs while there's time. Five words under everything: it can't be for nothing. Sometimes the most broken people are the ones that bring you the most value. AuDHD empathy isn't absent. It's a switch: off under overwhelm, explosive on trigger. One system. The mask filed helping under "too much." The diagnosis re-filed it: feature, not flaw. Every free show was the original model overriding the adaptation. The rebellion was right.

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Chapter 7: Helping Others

Hypnotise Themselves

Layer 1: The Story

Let me tell you what I actually do for a living. Not the posters version. The real one.

There's a story I tell, and I'll tell it here as a story about a volunteer, a composite of a hundred nights on stage over thirty years, because the pattern is more true than any single name could be. I bring this volunteer up, put him under, and when it's time to bring the row back, he won't leave his seat. Everyone else has snapped out and gone back to their tables, the show is moving on to the next routine, and he's still sitting there, in no hurry at all. Because that chair is the one place he knows exactly who he is, and home is a wife who, as he experiences it, nags him from the door.

So, quietly, while the rest of the room carried on, we talked. And the reframe I gave him was this: what if the nagging is her way of saying hi? What if "where have you been" and "you never" and "you always" are the only channel she's got left for trying to connect, and the content is just the carrier wave? He didn't buy it, quite. But he got up, and he

went home. And she said, "where have you been?" And instead of answering the words, he answered the signal. He put his arms round her, kissed her, and told her he loved her.

She went quiet. Not defeated quiet. Received quiet. The transmission had finally landed on the channel it was actually sent on.

Now. Who hypnotised whom, in that story? Putting him under was the easy part, and it wasn't the part that mattered. What actually got him out of that chair wasn't a countdown or a clap of the hands. It was a reframe. I gave him a different frame to carry with him, and he walked out of the venue and into his own kitchen and finished the induction himself, on both of them at once. That's the job. That's been the job the whole time. Bringing someone out of trance is just a reframe with a number count attached.

Here's the mechanism, and it's the closest thing to a trade secret this book contains, so I'll say it plainly. A fictional mask gives someone cover to drop their real one. Pretend it, but don't say you're pretending it. When a volunteer comes up on my stage and I tell them they're a world-class ballerina, the audience thinks I've put something into them. I haven't. I've taken something off them. For three minutes, they are officially not responsible for being the person everyone in that room knows. The accounts manager, the quiet one, the dad. The fiction is a permission slip. And what comes out, the dancing, the singing, the shameless joyful nonsense, doesn't come from me. It was in there the whole time, paying rent, waiting for somebody to say you're allowed.

That's why trust is the second most important part of hypnosis, and I said so in the original book. You don't hand your mask to someone you don't trust, even for three minutes, even dressed as a ballerina. So listen to what I actually say to my volunteers before anything begins, verbatim, unchanged since the first edition: "As far as I am concerned, all I want is for you to enjoy yourself this evening... do what feels right, expect nothing, keep an open mind, and most of all, enjoy yourself... You are my ambassadors."

Read it again. There's no command in it. No power. No mystique. It's a safety briefing for taking a mask off in public. Do what feels right. Expect nothing. Enjoy yourself. It's the exact opposite of what people think a hypnotist says, and it works better than everything people think a hypnotist says, which brings us back around, as everything in this book does, to the maxim: the only secret to hypnosis is that there is no secret to hypnosis. There's nothing in the box. There was never anything in the box. There's just a person, a permission, and whatever they were already carrying.

Which is where I have to stop and say the thing this whole book has been walking towards.

This book is about us, the characters inside me, and how hypnosis always helped me help others in realising themselves without realising myself.

Thirty years. Thousands of volunteers. Every single one of them handed the same gift: temporary permission to stop performing the person everyone thinks they are. And the man handing it out, the man in

the costume with the microphone, never once thought to check whether he might be the person in the room who needed it most.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

Strip the theatre away and here's what an induction actually is: the creation of a safe context in which someone can stop performing who they think they are. Say it that way, and the joke at the centre of my career stops being funny and starts being enormous.

Because what is masking? The performance of who you're supposed to be, running constantly, at cost, without an off switch. And what did I build my entire professional life around? Manufacturing off switches. For other people. Nightly.

I want you to see how exact the match is. My volunteers arrived carrying a public self they couldn't put down, because putting it down in ordinary life has social consequences. I supplied a fiction, you are a ballerina, you are a rock star, and the fiction absorbed all the consequences. Anything strange they did was now the hypnotist's doing, officially. Cover. Deniability. Permission. And under that cover, out came spontaneity, silliness, feeling, everything the public self had been sitting on. Then the show ended, they got their mask back, and they walked off lighter, because someone had witnessed what was underneath and the world hadn't ended.

I was running an unmasking service. I was running it before I knew the word masking. And I could run it with such precision, night after night,

because I was reading the manual off my own nervous system without knowing I was the manual. Of course I knew how heavy a public self gets. Of course I knew exactly what a person needs to feel safe enough to set it down: clear rules, no surprises, explicit permission, a script to stand inside, and someone in charge who will absolutely not let them come to harm. That's not a stage formula. That's the list of accommodations an autistic ADHD man needs in order to function, written by one, deployed as showbusiness.

I knew I wasn't just doing it for me. I was doing it for other people like me. I used to say that about the shows, about the books, about teaching. It was truer than I could afford to notice. The people like me weren't just the shy volunteers and the anxious ones. The person most like me at every single show was the one holding the microphone, the only man in the building whose mask never got a turn coming off.

And when the diagnosis finally came, and the mask finally dropped, this is the sentence that came out of the wreckage: when you don't know you're special, you don't have the chance to enjoy being special, and how special you are. And I've spent the last three years trying to catch up. Thirty years of giving out permission slips. Three years, so far, of learning to write one with my own name on it. The thesis of this book isn't a clever line. It's an invoice. Hypnosis always helped me help others in realising themselves, without realising myself. I'm settling that account now, in public, in these pages, because I know for a fact I'm not the only performer, or teacher, or parent, or nurse, who's been handing out a freedom they never once took for themselves.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

- **The line I said for years without hearing it.** In my old training notes, written decades before anyone said the word autistic to me, there's a sentence I used on any volunteer who started messing about. Firm, polite, one breath: "All Hypnosis is Self Hypnosis, I am merely the Facilitator." Read that against everything this chapter just argued. I had the entire mechanism, in writing, in my own hand. The hypnotist puts nothing in. The volunteer does all of it. The man at the front just holds the door open. I knew it so completely I used it as crowd control. I never once turned the sentence around and pointed it at the mirror.

- **Build the fiction thick enough to take the weight.** The role you hand a volunteer is a liability shield, so engineer it like one. "World-class ballerina" works because nothing done as a ballerina counts against the accounts manager. If the mask is too thin, the person stays responsible for what happens inside it, and a person who stays responsible stays shut.

- **The pre-talk is the induction.** Do what feels right, expect nothing, enjoy yourself, you are my ambassadors. No commands, because commands aren't the job. You're not installing anything, you're removing the fear of getting it wrong. Get the safety briefing right and the trance mostly takes care of itself. Screen for the three things that actually matter, imagination, concentration, willingness, and say so out loud before you begin.

- **Turn the obstacle into fuel.** Noisy room: ask politely first. "I've been paid to entertain you all tonight and the shouting is very distracting for everyone else in the audience... keep it down or take it outside so everyone can enjoy the show they've paid good money for." If that fails, don't fight the noise. Feed it to your subjects as suggestion: "The sounds and noises that you hear all around you are the relaxing sounds and noises of people enjoying themselves, you are safe and in good company, the louder it gets, the more relaxed you will become... no matter how loud the noise, you will always be able to hear the voice of the hypnotist." Anything you can't remove from the room, write into the frame. The heckle becomes the deepener.

- **Protect the unmasked, at both ends.** If someone keeps playing to the crowd instead of playing the role, back to their seat, immediately, pleasantly, no confrontation needed once the room sees you mean business. That's not punishment, it's safeguarding: the volunteers who genuinely set their masks down are exposed, and they matter more than the one who won't. And when the show ends, hand the masks back gently. They leave as the dad, the quiet one, the accounts manager, but lighter, witnessed, not stripped. Aftercare is craft, not courtesy.

- **A reframe is a portable induction.** The volunteer who wouldn't leave his seat wasn't stuck in trance, he was stuck in a story about what waited for him at home. He got a new frame, her nagging is her way of saying hi, and carried it out of the chair and into his own kitchen, and did the rest of the work himself. A suggestion that survives the drive home is worth fifty that only work under stage lights. After thirty years I drifted from traditional hypnosis toward pure suggestion work for

exactly this reason, and found it landed best with educated crowds, corporate rooms, the people carrying the heaviest public selves in the building.

- **Give them proof before you ask for trust.** This is the whole engine behind the suggestion course I built once I dropped formal hypnosis altogether. Rub your fingernails together for thirty seconds, hold your palms an inch apart, and feel the ball of energy sitting between them. Interlock your fingers, press your palms together, imagine glue, and watch them stick tighter the harder you try to pull apart. Neither trick needs a trance, an induction, or permission from me. It's a real, physical, undeniable sensation the person just generated with their own attention, wide awake, fully in control. Once someone has felt their own focus do something, they stop needing to be convinced it can do more. Everything after that, the beach they can visit in their own head for a five-minute power nap, the rehearsal that gets a skydiver calm before the jump, is the same one fact, restated: paradise is in the mind, and you already own the key. See the Appendix for the full course.

- **Run your own diagnostics.** The last craft note that matters, and the one I failed for thirty years: whatever you've become skilled at giving, check whether you have ever once received it. All hypnosis is self hypnosis. That includes the facilitator's.

TL;DR

A volunteer who wouldn't leave his seat. Reframe: her nagging is her way of saying hi. He went home, held her, told her he loved her. She

went quiet. Received quiet. A fictional mask gives someone cover to drop their real one. Pretend it, but don't say you're pretending it. Every volunteer gets the same gift: temporary permission to stop performing who everyone thinks they are. The pre-talk, verbatim since the first edition: do what feels right, expect nothing, enjoy yourself. You are my ambassadors. Trust is the second most important part of hypnosis. The only secret to hypnosis is that there is no secret to hypnosis. Nothing in the box. Never was. Induction is a safe context to stop performing. Masking is the performance. I ran an unmasking service for thirty years and never took a turn. This book is about us, the characters inside me, and how hypnosis always helped me help others in realising themselves without realising myself. When you don't know you're special, you don't get to enjoy it. Three years now, catching up.

. . .

Chapter 8: Rewriting the Rules

Layer 1: The Story

Let me end where the persona actually began. Not on a stage. In a corner shop.

I was a kid. Half-blind, weedy, you know him by now. And I wanted cigarettes, Consulate, the menthol ones, and I had no money, which by this point in the book you'll recognise as a recurring theme with better outcomes later. So I did what any budding mentalist would do. I told myself I had hypnotised the shopkeeper into handing them over, and I took them.

I had not, for the record, hypnotised the shopkeeper. I had hypnotised precisely one person in that shop, and he was walking out of it with the Consulates. Her son saw me take them and called the police. And when the police arrived, I explained, with what I imagine was total sincerity, that I thought she was hypnotised.

The shopkeeper looked at me and delivered her verdict to the police, and it is the finest review I have ever received, before or since: "He's nutty as a fruitcake."

And they let me go.

Think about that. The truth, I stole them, gets you a criminal record. A lie, I'm innocent, gets you caught lying. But the third thing, the thing that was somehow neither, I thought she was hypnotised, gets you released into the community with an official designation of harmless. Nutty as a fruitcake is not an insult. It's a credential. It's the first professional qualification I ever earned, and unlike some later application processes, I passed on the first tape.

Twelve years after I first published this book, I sat down and read it again. Same words. Different reader. Because between those two readings came a diagnosis, and a diagnosis, whatever else it does, is a new pair of glasses. You put them on, you pick up your own life, and you find out it was written in a language you'd been reading phonetically the whole time.

Every decision makes sense now. The CB radio instead of the playground: sense. The hypnosis learned as armour: sense. The absorbed act rebuilt off a Walkman: sense. The radios priced right when the world priced them wrong: sense. The mask built so well it fooled the wearer, the trainers that failed and the shoes that passed, the zero-pound gigs done half in secret like a vice: sense, sense, sense. Every mistake makes sense. Every success makes sense. Forty years of feeling like a faulty unit, and it turns out the unit was fine. It had simply been benchmarked, its whole life, against the wrong spec sheet.

That's the sentence I want carved somewhere: the rules I was playing by were never mine. Sit still. Look people in the eye. Don't be too

much. Charge what you're worth and nothing less. Wear the shoes. Reasonable rules, for a nervous system I don't have. I spent decades losing a game I was never actually entered in, and calling every loss a character flaw.

I'll allow myself one flight of fancy about it, because Doc Strange gets one per book. Some days I reckon we're in a kind of fifth dimensional prison, minds like ours especially. These minds are so easily distracted that they were sent here to be kept busy, to keep their hands occupied, rather than be out in whatever reality it is, causing absolute mayhem. I'm not building a religion on it. But as a description of what school felt like, you'll struggle to beat it.

Here's the version I do build on, though. Picture everything as a board, dark at one end, light at the other. If we all just move further to the other end of the board where it's light, we'll tip the balance. And the darkness will come to us, and we'll be able to lighten it. That's not mysticism. That's a stage plan. It's what every show I've ever done was, in miniature: get enough people into the light end of the room, laughing, unmasked, safe, and watch the heaviness slide down the board towards you, where you can work on it.

When the mask drops, what was always there comes back. And it turns out it was always the best version. The kid on the CB. The kid in the corner shop, nutty as a fruitcake, released without charge. The man on his knees in the alley. Doc Strange is the original. Chris P Tee was the adaptation. It took me until my late fifties to get the casting right, and

I'm not sorry, because the adaptation kept the original alive long enough to be found.

I've been in so many people's houses. So many different countries and cities and villages. Met so many people. Been on so many stages. It can't be for nothing.

It wasn't. It was for this. You're holding it.

Layer 2: The AuDHD Subtext

This chapter is the rereading itself, so let me do it in front of you, plainly, one exhibit at a time, because if you're undiagnosed or newly diagnosed, this is the exercise I most want you to steal.

The snails. Filed for forty years under: soft, odd, sentimental. Refiled: a perceptual system that receives distress signals other people's filters delete. The trait that made me the weird kid in the alley is the trait that makes me safe to be hypnotised by.

The CB radio. Filed under: escapism, avoiding real friends. Refiled: an accurate self-prescription. A kid found the one social medium with the sensory and social load stripped out, and inside it he wasn't disordered at all. He was the entertainment. The deficit was never in him. It was in the interface.

The arbitrage. Filed under: fly boy, wheeler dealer, won't get a proper job. Refiled: involuntary hyperabsorption of whole domains, which the world calls expertise when it comes with a lanyard and calls suspicious

when it comes from a fifteen year old with a President Madison on his desk.

The masking. Filed under: finally growing up and being professional. Refiled: the construction of Chris P Tee, a costume so effective it passed every gate, including gates a better, realer tape had failed, and so heavy that the wearer forgot there was a wearer.

The free shows. Filed under: bad business, mug behaviour, don't tell the accountant. Refiled: the original personality transmitting through the costume. The feature, not the flaw.

Five exhibits. One brain. Every single trait that got me in trouble as a kid became, unmodified, the exact skillset of the career, the philosophy, and now this book. Nothing was fixed in between. Nothing needed fixing. The traits didn't change. The rooms changed, and who was writing the rules for them.

That's what I mean by rewriting the rules, and I want to be precise, because it's not the revenge fantasy version. I don't get to rewrite the school reports. Very silly and centre of attention stand as written. What I get to rewrite is the rulebook they were marking against. Under the old rules, those reports were a warning. Under mine, they're a scouting report, and frankly the scout had an eye for talent. He's nutty as a fruitcake, and they let him go. Even the shopkeeper was ahead of the assessors by about forty-five years. She identified the condition, declared me no danger to the public, and released me back into the wild. I've had formal evaluations since that got less right.

When you don't know you're special, you don't have the chance to enjoy being special, and how special you are. That's the cost of a late diagnosis, in one sentence, and no reframe fully refunds it. There were decades in there. There were rooms I left early, work I never made, versions of me that never got a show. I'm allowed to grieve that, and if you're newly diagnosed, so are you, and take your time about it.

But then, glasses on, book open, here's what's also true. The manuscript was never wrong. I've been reading my own life phonetically since 1968, sounding out the words, getting the pronunciation marked wrong by people who couldn't read it either. Now I can read it properly, and it turns out it was never a list of errors.

It was an act. It was always an act, in the good sense, the Corfu sense: know what you are going to say, know what you are going to do, and the rest is easy. I just spent fifty years performing it before I got to read it.

I'm not sorry. I'm just finally reading my own book properly, twelve years late, with the right glasses on. And the last trick in it is the one I should have opened with: the hypnotist, realising himself. Took him long enough. He had cover, though. He was busy. There were all these people to wake up first.

Layer 3: The Craft Detail

For the working hypnotists, one last time. The closing techniques aren't stage techniques. They're maintenance instructions for the person doing

the stagework, and they apply whether or not you share my wiring.

- **Reread your own act through every new lens you acquire.**

Diagnosis, bereavement, recovery, a decade of experience, whatever changes your eyes, take it back through your old material. The act you wrote years ago contains information about you that you couldn't read when you wrote it. Mine did. This entire book is that exercise, performed in public. Yours can be a notebook and an honest evening.

- **Audit your rulebook, rule by rule.** Every working performer runs on inherited rules: how to dress, how to price, how to behave offstage, what a proper career looks like. List yours. Next to each one, write down whose rule it actually is. Keep the ones that are yours. The rest were never binding. I lost decades to a dress code and a fee structure written by people who were not living my life.

- **The fruitcake defence is a real positioning strategy.** Genuinely. The performer who is warmly, openly, unapologetically strange is forgiven things the slick professional is crucified for. Audiences police pretence, not oddness. The shopkeeper's verdict is the mechanism: name the strangeness honestly and people relax around it. Every gate I ever tried to pass by hiding it, I either failed or paid too much for. Every room I've entered since leading with it has let me go, in the best sense.

- **Move to the light end of the board, professionally.** Book the rooms, build the acts, and keep the company that sit at the light end, and let the heaviness come to you on your terms, where you're resourced to work on it. This is the stagecraft version of every safeguarding instinct you

have: you don't wade into the dark end to help, you make the light end so good that people walk towards it.

- **The original is the act. Everything else is packaging.** When the mask drops, what was always there comes back, and it turns out it was always the best version. Whatever your Doc Strange is, the pre-adaptation you, that's the performer people are actually paying to be in a room with. The craft in this book, the inductions, the pre-talk, the routines, all of it works best when it's delivered by the original. Build the skills onto who you actually are. Any idiot can be a hypnotist. But only you can be this one.

TL;DR

Corner shop, childhood. Told myself I'd hypnotised the shopkeeper into handing over the Consulates. I hadn't. Her son called the police. Told the police I thought she was hypnotised. Verdict: "He's nutty as a fruitcake." And they let me go. That's not an insult. That's a credential. First qualification I ever earned. Twelve years on, reread the book with the diagnosis on. Every decision makes sense. Every mistake makes sense. Every success makes sense. The rules I was playing by were never mine. Losing a game I was never entered in. Snails, radio, arbitrage, masking, free shows: every trait that got me in trouble became the career, unmodified. The rooms were wrong, not the unit. Move to the light end of the board. The darkness comes to you. Lighten it there. When the mask drops, what was always there comes back. It was always the best version. Doc Strange is the original. Chris P Tee

was the adaptation. Been in so many houses, cities, countries, on so many stages. It can't be for nothing. It wasn't. You're holding it.

* * *

Appendix: The Wide Awake

Suggestion Course

Everything in this appendix is wide awake work. No trance, no countdown, no permission needed from anyone but yourself. This is the course referenced in Chapter 7, built and taught long after formal hypnosis, for exactly the audiences, corporate rooms, sceptics, educated crowds, who want the results without the theatre.

The three pillars, before anything else:

Self-control is paramount. You are completely wide awake and aware of everything at all times. You retain control and can stop at any time.

It's purely positive. The purpose is enjoyment, relaxation, confidence, and positive change. You cannot be made to do anything against your morals.

The mechanism is concentration and imagination. Paradise is in the mind.

Module 1: Mastering Focus

The Energy Ball. Rub your fingernails together quickly for about thirty seconds, then hold your hands slightly apart and feel for the ball of energy between your palms. Why it works: this is a real, undeniable physical sensation, created entirely by your own action and focus. It isn't hypnosis. It's a feeling you generated yourself, on purpose.

The Hand Clasp. Interlock your fingers and press your palms together, imagining powerful glue sticking them tight. The harder you try to pull your hands apart, the more they stick. Why it works: it demonstrates that a focused suggestion can influence a physical response, wide awake, with a moment of genuine surprise built in.

The Pendulum Effect. Stand still, focus on your balance, and allow your body to sway naturally. Why it works: it confirms your own ability to concentrate, and shows the mind-body connection doing something you can feel.

Module 2: Deep Relaxation

The Happy Place. Take yourself, mentally, to a beautiful golden beach, blue sky, blue sea, sun at a comfortable temperature. Why it works: paradise is in the mind, applied directly. A sensory-rich scene that delivers real peace, on demand.

Microwave Sleep. A few minutes of deliberate, focused rest that leaves you feeling like you've had hours of it. Why it works: it's a genuine tool for busy, tired people, delivering real refreshment in a fraction of the time.

Finding Comfort Anywhere. Wherever you are, imagine sinking into your own bed, with its familiar smells and sheets, regardless of where you actually are. Why it works: it teaches you to manufacture comfort anywhere, using only your own mind.

Module 3: Applying Positive Suggestion

Building Confidence. From the relaxed state, see yourself as capable, calm, fabulous. You are what you believe yourself to be. Why it works: it goes straight at the inner critic, and it's simple enough to use before anything that matters.

Mental Rehearsal for Success. The way skydivers rehearse the jump before they make it, visualise the thing ahead of you going well. See yourself calm, confident, successful. Why it works: it reframes anxiety as under-preparation, and hands you a sense of control over what hasn't happened yet.

Overcoming Anxiety and Stress. Use the relaxed state to switch off the internal dialogue and rehearse difficult situations before they arrive. Why it works: practical tools for real-time stress, usable anywhere, needing nothing but your own attention.

Real-World Stories from Thirty Years

Corfu, again. Broke, a rucksack, a campsite owner, and three words: I am a hypnotist. The lesson isn't confidence trickery. It's that belief plus action starts things qualifications never could.

When nobody volunteers. Even after thirty years, some rooms don't warm up the way you'd like. The fix was never a better line. It was better preparation and a willingness to sit with the room's temperature before pushing the show forward.

The neurodivergent advantage. Most of this career ran on undiagnosed AuDHD. Hyperfocus, an inability to tolerate dishonesty, obsessive pattern recognition, none of it was a limitation dressed up as a career. It was the actual advantage, doing the job it was always going to do, with or without a diagnosis attached.

. . .

What Happens Next

If any of this landed, here's how it works.

chrisptee.co.uk — free month of the Business tier, EntertainCMS included, no card required. Give it a go. If it's useful, stay. If it isn't, you've lost nothing.

The monthly draw. Every Founder who buys this book goes into a monthly draw. One person, every month, gets a signed copy sent to them. No catch, no entry form. You bought the book, you're in.

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rather. Nobody's chasing you. I help you, you help me. That's the whole deal.

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About the Author

Doc Strange (Christian P Taylor) has worked as a stage hypnotist, magician, and children's entertainer across the UK and Europe for over thirty years. Diagnosed AuDHD in his fifties, he now writes and speaks about the overlap between performance, masking, and neurodivergence, alongside continuing to perform. He lives in the Bristol area.

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Coming Next: Reframing

The next book by Doc Strange.

My dad was on a ship when it sank.

The MV Oceanus, off the South African coast. The captain — the man whose job it was to be last off — got himself into a rescue vehicle and left. The crew went with him. And the people left on a sinking ship were the passengers, and the entertainers.

My dad was one of the entertainers.

He stayed.

He also followed the Beatles round Hamburg, was Marty Wilde's right-hand man, got hogtied at gunpoint in his own garage, lost his voice to throat cancer, and kept going. He told me:

Fear is False Evidence Appearing Real.

Reframing is the book about what that actually means. Not the motivational poster version. The one you learn from someone who got through the actual thing.

Founders at chrisptee.co.uk get their copy included automatically.

Every Founder who buys it goes into the monthly draw — one signed copy, every month. And if I help you earn, you help me. That's the whole deal.

* * *

The Raver's Manifesto

Anon. First published on GlowGadgets.co.uk, circa 2002. Origin unknown. Preserved here because it belongs here.

. . .

Our emotional state of choice is Ecstasy. Our nourishment of choice is Love. Our addiction of choice is technology.

Our religion of choice is music. Our currency of choice is knowledge. Our politics of choice is none.

Our society of choice is utopian though we know it will never be.

You may hate us. You may dismiss us. You may misunderstand us. You may be unaware of our existence.

We can only hope you do not care to judge us, because we would never judge you.

We are not criminals. We are not disillusioned. We are not drug addicts. We are not naive children.

We are one massive, global, tribal village that transcends man-made law, physical geography, and time itself.

We are The Massive. One Massive.

We were first drawn by the sound. From far away, the thunderous, muffled, echoing beat was comparable to a mother's heart soothing a child in her womb of concrete, steel, and electrical wiring.

We were drawn back into this womb, and there, in the heat, dampness, and darkness of it, we came to accept that we are all equal. Not only to the darkness, and to ourselves, but to the very music slamming into us and passing through our souls: we are all equal.

And somewhere around 35 Hz we could feel the hand of God at our backs, pushing us forward — pushing us to strengthen our minds, our bodies, and our spirits.

Pushing us to turn to the person beside us to join hands and uplift them by sharing the uncontrollable joy we felt from creating this magical bubble that can, for one evening, protect us from the horrors, atrocities, and pollution of the outside world.

It is in that very instant, with these initial realisations, that each of us was truly born.

We continue to pack our bodies into clubs, or warehouses, or buildings you've abandoned and left for naught, and we bring life to them for one night.

Strong, throbbing, vibrant life in its purest, most intense, most hedonistic form.

In these makeshift spaces, we seek to shed ourselves of the burden of uncertainty for a future you have been unable to stabilise and secure for us.

We seek to relinquish our inhibitions, and free ourselves from the shackles and restraints you've put on us for your own peace of mind.

We seek to re-write the programming that you have tried to indoctrinate us with since the moment we were born. Programming that tells us to hate, that tells us to judge, that tells us to stuff ourselves into the nearest and most convenient pigeonhole possible. Programming that even tells us to climb ladders for you, jump through hoops, and run through mazes and on hamster wheels.

Programming that tells us to eat from the shiny silver spoon you are trying to feed us with, instead of nourish ourselves with our own capable hands.

Programming that tells us to close our minds, instead of open them.

Until the sun rises to burn our eyes by revealing the dystopian reality of a world you've created for us, we dance fiercely with our brothers and sisters in celebration of our life, of our culture, and of the values we believe in:

Peace, Love, Freedom, Tolerance, Unity, Harmony, Expression, Responsibility and Respect.

Our enemy of choice is ignorance. Our weapon of choice is information. Our crime of choice is breaking and challenging whatever laws you feel you need to put in place to stop us from celebrating our existence.

But know that while you may shut down any given party, on any given night, in any given city, in any given country or continent on this beautiful planet, you can never shut down the entire party.

You don't have access to that switch, no matter what you may think. The music will never stop.

The heartbeat will never fade. The party will never end.

I am a raver, and this is my manifesto.

. . .

We don't know where this came from. If you do, tell us. We want to give them a hug and credit them for it.

glowgadgets.co.uk

. . .

You Made It

The blurb was back here all along.

The back cover is a Mandelbrot fractal — infinite, psychedelic, alive. Free download at docstrange.co.uk/fractal — or get it automatically as a Founder at chrilstee.co.uk. Frame it. Canvas it. UV light it. It belongs on a wall.

For thirty years, Doc Strange put people into trance and helped them see themselves clearly.

Nobody did the same for him.

This is the memoir of a stage hypnotist who spent three decades masking undiagnosed AuDHD as showmanship — using every performance trick in the book to seem like someone who had it together, while quietly falling apart offstage.

The school reports saw it first. The teachers wrote it down in blue biro: *"invariably preoccupied," "demands more attention than can be met," "criticism pours off him like water off a duck's back."* They thought they were writing complaints.

They were writing the diagnosis.

Part memoir, part craft manual, part permission slip — for anyone who's spent their life helping other people feel real while wondering why they never quite managed it themselves.

chrisptee.co.uk