

Shrink Rap Radio #12, November 7, 2005. Altered States of Consciousness

Adam Ronscavage, MA interviews Dr. David Van Nuys, aka “Dr. Dave”

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Dale Hoff)

Introduction: Hello to all of you out there in podcast land. This is David Van Nuys, aka Dr. Dave, coming to you once again from the beautiful wine country in Sonoma County, California. Shrink Rap Radio is the podcast that speaks from the psychologist in me to the psychologist in you, whether you be an amateur, student or professional. It’s all the psychology you need to know and just enough to make you a little bit dangerous.

Suzanne [Maiden]: I’m Suzanne

Robin [Maiden]: And I’m Robin

Suzanne: We are insytworks.com. That’s I,N,S,Y,T,W,O,R,K,S, dot com.

Robin: And you are listening to Dr. Dave on Shrink Rap Radio.

Dr. Dave: Hey thanks, Robin and Suzanne, for that endorsement. A topic that has been near and dear to my heart is altered states of consciousness and that’s the focus of today’s show. At about the time I was finishing up my doctoral program, there was a lot of interest in the culture at large in such things as meditation, enlightenment, psychedelic drugs, hypnosis, dreams and so on. All of these are examples of altered states of consciousness. Charles Tart, then a professor at the University of California at Davis, even came out with a very influential book with the title *Altered States of Consciousness*. Why is this an important topic? Well, a couple of answers readily come to mind. The first is that throughout time in every culture, human beings have developed culturally sanctioned methods designed to alter their states of consciousness, usually in the quest for ecstatic states. They have used not only various forms of alcohol and other drugs, but also such techniques as prolonged periods of dancing, fasting, meditation, chanting and drumming, among other techniques. So there is a universal desire to periodically get out of our head or change our mind, so to speak. That’s the first reason why it’s important to study altered states. The second reason is that the world looks different when you’re in an altered state. You pay attention to different things and your priorities change, sometimes for the better. An everyday example of altered states would be our

moods. When you are extremely depressed, your whole experience of the world is colored by that state of mind. It affects your perception. Everything you see seems to confirm your feelings of hopelessness. Conversely, when you're in the flush of being in love, the whole world looks bright and welcoming and you feel like you could accomplish anything you want. Thus our ability to achieve and maintain certain states of consciousness may contribute to our long-term survival of the species. Altered states of consciousness then can be seen as other ways of knowing. The bias of our own culture tends to be that there is only one way of knowing, one reality, one truth. The study of altered states of consciousness suggests otherwise. All of this is a lead-in to today's interview and the interviewee, in this case, is me. The interviewer is Adam Ronscavage who teaches Advance Placement Psychology to high school students in Denver. He also produces a podcast for his students, which is called the AP Psychology podcast. His class is currently studying the topic of altered states and he wanted to interview me on this topic for his students on his podcast so I thought I'd share the interview with my audience as well. So here it is.

Ronscavage: I am here or, I don't know, okay—I am here with, because we are in different parts of the country right now, but this is Dr. Dave Van Nuys. He is the producer of Shrink Rap Radio. It's a psychology podcast that I had searched for and listened to and I'm a big fan and he's with us today. Hello Dr. Dave.

Dr. Dave: Hello. I'm happy to be here.

Ronscavage: Good. Currently, we are chatting on the Gizmo Project which is a pretty wonderful program, I think. I think we've had some good look with it so, I guess, we'll take it away. Dr. Dave, I've listened to your podcast and it's very interesting. Why don't you tell us about your educational background and maybe some of your professional background.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Well, let's see. I am a PhD psychologist. And, I didn't always know that I wanted to be a psychologist. Originally, I thought I was going to be an electrical engineer and that's what I was accepted into college to study. And, I was actually turned off by the first psychology class I ever took. I didn't care for it that much. It seemed like it was all about studying rats and how they run in mazes. And so I ended up majoring in creative writing, switched out of engineering, majored in

creative writing and then later on, I heard about clinical psychology where psychologists could be psychotherapists and that had a lot of interest to me. So, after I got my bachelor's degree in creative writing from the University of Pennsylvania, I went to a master's program at the University of Montana and I spent two years working on a master's in kind of general experimental psychology and then, would you believe it, it took another six years at the University of Michigan to finally get a PhD in clinical psychology. From there, I went to my first—my first and only—job at Sonoma State University where I was a Psychology professor for a long time.

Ronscavage: That's great.

Dr. Dave: So, that's kind of the educational track. And I both taught at the university and also had a private practice in psychotherapy at the same time for a number of years. Then I migrated into a form of business consulting, market research, consumer research that I did alongside the teaching and let the psychotherapy go after about twelve years.

Ronscavage: Gotcha. Well, that's quite a road you've traveled.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Ronscavage: You know what's amazing is how do you go from engineering to creative writing? I mean those seem to be on the opposite spectrum of education.

Dr. Dave: You know, I agree and I think I'm unusual that way. I think I'm sort of—you know people tend to specialize in either, oh, sort of metaphorically, the left hemisphere or the right hemisphere, people tend to either be very science-oriented or very humanities oriented. But I've always seemed to be sort of right down the middle with strong interests and skills in both areas. So I was a ham radio operator as a kid and so I was very involved in electronics and learning about electronics and learning Morse code so it seemed natural to go into engineering but at the same time, you know, I guess that ham radio was a lot about communicating with people and talking to distant people, talking to distant strangers, kind of like podcasting now.

Ronscavage: Right. That's great. Okay, well, in my class, my current AP Psych class, we're studying a chapter on consciousness and altered states and drug

addiction. So, I'm wondering, with your experience on altered states, how do you define what an altered state is and how do you see this as a benefit to psychology and/or therapy?

Dr. Dave: Okay, that's a good and complex question and I should just back up so that your listeners know that as part of my doctoral studies—anybody who is in a doctoral program, you come to a place where you have to specialize and you have to write a long book-like thing called a dissertation and often there's an exam that you take just prior to that. And so the area that I chose for my specialization was, in fact, altered states of consciousness. I was very influenced by a book by Charles Tart, which your students might want to go to the library and find and the book was *Altered States of Consciousness* by Charles Tart. And it's a collection of papers covering everything from dreaming to hypnosis to meditation to drug states and so on. How do we define an altered state? I was thinking about that a bit and I'm not sure that I have a good definition for you. I think we all sort of know what it is when we're in "normal consciousness," as you and I presumably are right now.

Ronscavage: At least we hope so, right?

Dr. Dave: We hope so but, of course, we have no way of knowing what another person's conscious experience is except for what they report to us, except for what they tell us about it. It's the old philosophical conundrum, you know, if we're both looking at something that we call blue, we don't really have any way of knowing, you know, what your experience of blueness is versus my experience of blueness. We've learned to use the same word, blue, and to match it up to an experience, but we don't really have any way of knowing whether or not we are having the same experience.

Ronscavage: We can't really peer into the mind.

Dr. Dave: That's right.

Ronscavage: And see it from somebody else's eyes.

Dr. Dave: That's right. In fact, I guess, there are some external correlates of what we would call non-altered states of consciousness. In other words, there are probably certain brain wave patterns that are character—well, we know, not

probably, we know that there are certain brain wave patterns that are characteristic of waking consciousness versus sleep, for example.

Ronscavage: Correct and different patterns within sleep itself.

Dr. Dave: Right. So maybe, you know, that's a great place to start talking about altered states because there are two or three distinct states there that we all experience, you know, every day of our lives, waking consciousness versus sleeping consciousness versus—well, I would say versus dreamless sleep versus dreaming sleep. So there are three states that, I think, we all experience and each is very different from the other. And of course there are things to be—you know, you said, “Well how can these things be used in psychotherapy?” Well, certainly, psychologists, since the time of Freud, have used dreams as an important vehicle for understanding what's going on in a person's life and one of the wonderful and distinctive characteristics about dreaming consciousness is that dreams don't lie. In our so-called normal consciousness, we can engage in various kinds of deception, self-deception as well as lying to other people and we can lie to ourselves.

Ronscavage: I agree.

Dr. Dave: But I maintain that our dreams don't lie. They speak the truth about what our inner feelings, concerns, conflicts, hopes and fears are.

Ronscavage: So, what you are saying is that if we take a good look at our dreams, we're taking a good look at the self.

Dr. Dave: Yes, very much so. I've been influenced a lot in this by the thinking of Carl Jung, spelled J, U, N, G, and his followers. And, he looked at the unconscious in a different way than Freud did. Freud saw the unconscious as a fairly negative place filled with sort of hidden impulses that we need to put down in ourselves so that we can be civilized creatures.

Ronscavage: Right. Anger and death wishes and just a lot of things that we need to push down, right? That's what you're saying?

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Exactly. While Jung acknowledged that there is that aspect to the unconscious, he also felt that there's a lot of positive aspects of our personality and a lot of our undeveloped potential lies in the unconscious and that by tracking our

dreams, we could become more in touch with those potentials, with those positive potentials and begin to actualize them in our lives.

Ronscavage: Is it kind of like that aha moment when you have a problem that you've been working on all day and then you wake up in the middle of the night and you're like, "That's it. I got it."

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Yeah. And, as a matter of fact, that word, aha, has been used to talk about dreamwork. A fellow that I know who's written several books, Jeremy Taylor, has written a book called *Dreamwork* and he talks about when you're working a dream, the dreamer at some point will have that recognition that Jeremy Taylor calls the aha experience or the tingle, the tingle test.

Ronscavage: I like that.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. It's very accessible, a very readable book. I would really recommend it.

Ronscavage: Good. You know, going on this topic of dreams, I think one question that I get in AP Psychology class besides, "Does hypnosis work?" is "What do dreams mean?" Care to elaborate on that?

Dr. Dave: Sure. And am I remembering that you tried to refer to a place where you'd logged some dreams?

Ronscavage: Yeah, I do.

Dr. Dave: I forgot to go there.

Ronscavage: That's okay because I have it up right now. I could show you what I've written on here on my AP Psychology blog and maybe you can give me a little bit of your insight.

Dr. Dave: I'll give it a shot. This is working without a net here so, you know, we may crash and burn but let's—do you have maybe a short dream that you could read from that?

Ronscavage: Yeah. All of these are very short.

Dr. Dave: And, I have to warn you, dreams reveal things about our personal lives so, who knows what we're going to find out here.

Ronscavage: Well, we'll give it a shot.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Ronscavage: It says here, this is part one. So I had a weird dream about some college buddies, quite vivid, but all I remember is that we are going fishing, or at least traveling somewhere, and that we had to stop at the store for something. All of a sudden, I am all alone in a room bigger than a closet but smaller than a normal room. It must have been a storage room. My friends were nowhere to be found and some strange lady came into that room and started talking to me about the store. Then I woke up.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Well, in my approach to dreams, you know, it's not like I am the oracle and able to just spit back, "oh, here's what your dream means." It's really a process of mutual exploration where I invite the person to give their associations to the different parts of the dream so we can try that a little bit. And then the other thing that we do is use a format called *if this were my dream*, which is a good way to respond to a dream in a way that protects the other person from projections because whatever I see in your dream, you know, I say, "Ah, oh, here's something. This indicates that you have hidden hostility towards your father." You know, well, that's my projection. That's my guess. It's more likely that I have hidden hostility towards my father, or at least that I have that which would sensitize me to seeing that in your dream. So a way of kind of protecting you from that is to be really explicit and say, "Well if this were my dream, this is what it would be about." So let me start there and say that if I had had the dream that you just reported, I would say for me it would be about looking back, looking back to maybe when times were easier days, fun days when I had fewer responsibilities when I was in college and I could just knock around and maybe things were easier. And, for me, it would be a dream about reflection and thinking back and, for me, I'm particularly struck by the idea of the storage room. And, I would ask myself, "Well, what's a storage room?" You know, right away, that makes me think about memory, you know, the place where I store things.

Ronscavage: Oh Yeah.

Dr. Dave: And so, for me, this might be a dream about looking back and turning over some memories and comparing some time in the past to now.

Ronscavage: That's pretty right on because I could say lately I have done a lot of reflection on my life and where I've been and where I am today. And I have to say I'm really pleased where I am today and in no way am I yearning to go back there.

Dr. Dave: Okay, Okay.

Ronscavage: But, that's interesting that you say that because I have been doing a lot of reflection and it has been actually quite positive.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Good. And see, the way in for me—I think the way to listen to dreams is to read them, not literally, but metaphorically. So, I took the idea of storage room and think, “Well, a storage room, what is that a metaphor for?” You know, rather than thinking about some actual enclosed room, rather, “Well what is a storage room? A place where you store stuff.” So that's what we do is we listen to dreams in the way that you would listen to poetry. You're listening for the metaphors. People think that dreams talk a crazy, nonsensical, ununderstandable language, but that's not the case. They speak a rather clear language—you know, people think, “Well if the dream's trying to tell me something, why doesn't it just come out and say it.” It does, but it does so in a metaphorical language, a largely visual metaphorical language. Let me just say briefly why I think that's so. I think that our dreams talk to us in a developmentally earlier kind of language. I think you've talked to your students about the stages of development. And so the way that I think about it is that our dreams are, kind of baby talk, that they speak in the first language before we acquired words. And, you know, babies are quite intelligent. Yeah. There's stuff going on inside there.

Ronscavage: They're a lot smarter than you think they are.

Dr. Dave: Right, but how are they doing that before they have words, before they've acquired language? My guess is that they are processing sensations, sense impressions and particularly, visual impressions because such a large portion of our brain is mapped out to the visual cortex. And so I think that's part of the reason why our sleep experience is so visual. I've speculated that dogs and bears maybe have dreams in smell.

Ronscavage: Oh, yeah. That's a really good speculation. You know, my students right now are doing kind of a dream analysis and not necessarily analyzing the content but looking and see if they do have experiences of smell and taste and touch, other sensory information or if it's just largely visual.

Dr. Dave: I think they'll find that it's mostly visual although those other modalities can occur.

Ronscavage: Right. Yeah, well, we'll see what happens. They'll be turning it in this week so it'll be interesting to see.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Now you mentioned hypnosis and I think you had some questions for me around hypnosis.

Ronscavage: Yeah. First of all, you know, I talk a lot about hypnosis. I took a brief class with a hypnotherapist and I learned quite a bit. It was really wonderful. But could you please for the listeners out there, dispel any myths that there are about hypnosis.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Let's see if I can remember all the myths. One certainly is that you have to be stupid and gullible to be able to be hypnotized and research shows that that's not true. In fact, it's quite the reverse that hypnotizability tends to be correlated with intelligence. So the more intelligent you are, the more likely it is that you could move into a hypnotic state.

Ronscavage: I must be pretty smart then.

[laughter]

Dr. Dave: Right. Well, that was already clear to me.

Ronscavage: A lot of kids think that—you know, they've seen the movie Office Space and I don't know if you're familiar with the movie but this guy goes to a hypnotherapist and he's hypnotized but his therapist has a heart attack and dies in the middle of the therapy session. So he's stuck.

Dr. Dave: I never saw that movie.

Ronscavage: It's actually a quite clever movie. But, it kind of gives him this life where he doesn't care about anything because he's hypnotized. Is that even a remote possibility?

Dr. Dave: No. No, you can't—you don't get stuck in hypnosis. Sometimes people who've been fooling around with hypnosis will panic. Some—let me back up a little bit and say that another myth is that you're asleep when you're hypnotized because we use the metaphor of sleep and in some ways hypnosis as we know it is a culturally learned phenomenon. We have learned to use the metaphor of sleep in relation to hypnosis but that's not the only possible metaphor. I mean people wouldn't have to have their eyes closed and feel drowsier and drowsier and so on. That's actually a historical accident that I'm not sure it makes sense to go into right here. But, at any rate, sometimes people have hypnotized a friend and then the friend went into some kind of deep state and didn't come out right away and people sometimes panic. But, in fact, if the person—generally if you just leave them be they'll, you know, they'll come around on their own. Then they fall asleep and wake up. They may have, in fact, fallen asleep because sometimes people actually fall asleep when you tell them to close their eyes and relax.

Ronscavage: I've had that happen when I do my progressive relaxation activity in class and I'd say about one out of every two classes there's a kid in the back who's going [snore]. And then I wake them up and I tell them to kind of open their eyes when they're ready. Some people take a little bit longer and that's just fine.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. So, what is hypnosis? And that is a question that psychologists continue to struggle with and to debate because there are some extreme views on two sides of the aisle. One side saying, "Yes, hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness." And there's another side of the aisle that says, "No. It's not an altered state of consciousness. It's just people complying with suggestions, just trying to please somebody who's in the role of the hypnotist. That's a very interesting debate.

Ronscavage: As far as using hypnosis in therapy, do you have experience doing that?

Dr. Dave: Yeah. I did that some. My doctoral dissertation, in fact, was about hypnosis. My doctoral study—I was interested in both—I have a long-standing

interest in hypnosis and I was also interested in meditation at that time when I was doing my doctoral work. So, I studied the hypothesis that both meditation and hypnosis involved the focusing of attention and that people who are able focus their attention and keep it focused on something, in other words to really concentrate and become absorbed and wrapped up in something, that those would be the people who would be both the best meditators and the best hypnotic subjects. And I forgot your question. It was something about hypnosis and therapy.

Ronscavage: Have you used it? What's your experience of using hypnosis in therapy? For instance, what clients come to you for hypnosis? Like we all hear of stop smoking and quitting maybe alcoholism or something like that, but what are maybe some of the unusual cases that have come to you where you've used hypnosis in therapy?

Dr. Dave: Yeah. It's been quite a few years actually because I stopped doing therapy some time back. But people did use to come to me quite a bit because they had heard that I was involved with hypnosis. And I think people come with a lot of magical expectations about what hypnosis is going to be. They often expect it to be a much more dramatic experience because of things they've seen in stage hypnosis presentations.

Ronscavage: Right.

Dr. Dave: Which are—those are kind of a different beast all to themselves.

Ronscavage: Like the whole, "I didn't feel hypnotized."

Dr. Dave: Yeah. That's a very common statement that people make is, "Well, geez, I didn't really feel hypnotized. I just felt relaxed. I didn't have to go along with what you were saying but I sort of wanted to or I didn't want to embarrass you so I kind of went along with it." People will have experiences that range all the way from that very sort of light kind of experience to some people just have some kind of an innate capability to go deep within themselves and to shut everything else out and they will report a much more profound experience of hypnosis. So I would say that I used hypnosis, you know, aside from working with people who wanted to quit a habit or break an addiction, used it in ways to help people explore

their feelings as a way to try to get down closer to their unconscious, if you will, or to their deeper emotions.

Ronscavage: Sort of self-exploration?

Dr. Dave: Yes, yes or guided exploration. And to create a safe, comfortable space where they could be relaxed and allow previously threatening material to kind of come up but create a safe container for it.

Ronscavage: Speaking of exploration, and I'm going to skip down a few questions if you don't mind. Maybe some of the other ones we can go into in a later interview. But, students of mine who do want to explore and tap into their subconscious via dreams or maybe some type of like a self-hypnosis meditation kind of a thing, do you have any advice for them?

Dr. Dave: Well, I think dreams are the most accessible way for your students to do that. And the place to start is to keep a dream journal. This is not exactly a diary. I know when I was in high school, I tried to keep a diary a couple of times, you know, to write about my angst and my daily life but then I'd miss a day or two and then I'd feel like, "Oh, I blew it," you know, and I'd kind of give up because I had this notion that I had to write in it every single day and if I didn't keep up that discipline then I was a failure. So, I recommend a dream journal but starting it with a different kind of feeling. A) You don't have to write in it every day. Some people will. Some people won't. Most of us have the experience of going through periods where we seem to recall a lot of dreams and then other periods where it feels very dry and we're not recalling them. So, the idea is when you wake up in the morning—dreams are like smoke. They quickly dissipate.

Ronscavage: I agree with you.

Dr. Dave: Most of us can't remember many dreams if we haven't written them down and we think back over the course of our lives. I'll bet you most people would have trouble telling you more than five dreams, if they could tell you that many. But if you write them down then you've kind of captured them. And you may feel often it's frustrating, you feel like, "Oh, this isn't really what I dreamt. This is just a shadow. My memory is so poor for what actually happened. I know there was more than that." Well, that's okay. You just have to override that and

write down what you can remember. Part of what I teach my students—I teach a university course on dreams and so all the students in that class are taught to keep a dream journal to write their dreams in the present. So instead of saying, “I was running away from this monster that was chasing me” you write down, “I am running away from this monster that is chasing me.” We write it in the present. That helps to revivify the dream, to bring it into the present, to make it more real, to get you back into it will help with recall. The other thing that I ask students to do is to give their dream a title like a newspaper headline and you just go with that first title that comes to mind. That title ends up being a mini-interpretation because you’ve seized on what for you is the central element of the dream. So, you record the dream and then after you do that, you free-associate to the elements of the dream. I recommend that you read back through your dream and you underline key words that pop out at you. So, storage might be one word, closet might be another, friends might be another.

Ronscavage: Right, maybe words that have emotion to them.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, particularly words that have emotion, words that have some kind of metaphorical potential. Often dreams have puns in them or humorous things in them that are interesting to pay attention to. So, at any rate, you write down your associations to those key words, you think about what happened the previous day and then you look at what the dream might be saying metaphorically about the concerns and things that are going on in your life. Because, invariably, the dreams are commentary about what’s going on in our lives. Dreams are more, there are so many levels to the dream, but as a clinical psychologist, as a psychotherapist, my own bias always takes me to, “Hmmm. What does this have to say about this person’s emotional life?”

Ronscavage: Sure, sure. You know, one thing the kids do whenever I say, “If you want to record your dreams, that’s great,” and a bunch of hands go up and they all say, “Well I never remember my dreams. I can’t dream.” Do you have any suggestions for people to aid in their memory of dreams?

Dr. Dave: Yes. One is start reading about dreams. Get a book like the one that I recommended, *Dreamwork* by Jeremy Taylor—very easy to read. High school students would have no difficulty at all reading a book like that, would find it very

compelling and easy to read, with lots of suggestions about how to remember your dreams and so on. And just the practice of reading a book that's about dreams kind of sends a message to your unconscious and says, "Hey, I'm interested in you. I'm going to take you seriously" and the unconscious will respond. Another thing is to try to remember to ask yourself when you first wake up—if you get up, if you start moving, the dream starts to flee right away. So, it's important to just lay there very still and ask yourself, "What's going on in my mind right now? What kind of feelings have I woken up with? Do I remember any dream?" Another is to value dream fragments. Often we think, "Oh, well. I can't remember a whole dream. I just remember this tiny little bit." That's okay. You can get as much out of a fragment as you can out of a long dream. I think that dreams kind of have a holographic aspect, you know. I never know whether to call it a holograph or a hologram, but you know those pictures that when you shine a laser light through it, it gives you kind of a three-dimensional view. And, what I've heard is that if you break one of those glass holograph plates in half, you still see the picture and if you break that in half, you still see it, so that all of the details are captured all over this thing. And, in the same way, I think dreams, even the dream fragments, seem to contain the key elements underlying the dream.

Ronscavage: That's great. That's really good advice. Thanks a lot.

Dr. Dave: Sure.

Ronscavage: Moving on from dreams and you've brought up some books and that's great. Hopefully, some of my students or anybody else out there will check them out. Let's talk about your podcast.

Dr. Dave: Oh, okay. Well, I have a podcast called Shrink Rap Radio where I interview people who are involved in psychology in one way or another. And I'm just trying to—because I think they're interesting. They're doing interesting things, like you. You're doing something really interesting with psychology and your podcasting and your outreach to students. I just want to interview these people and make it available to, you know, kind of as a service to the world and to anybody who might be interested in psychology at any level.

Ronscavage: That's great. So, as far as things that you'd like to accomplish, do you even have a list yet or are you kind of like me and just seeing what happens.

Dr. Dave: I think kind of seeing what happens. I definitely have a list of people that I'm planning to interview because having been in the field for a long time, you know, there are a lot of very diverse psychologists that I know—and also something about living in California because California is a hotbed of, what, free thinking and interesting ideas and so I've kind of been in the middle of that for a long time.

Ronscavage: You know we've got Boulder right nearby us here in Denver so we're not too far removed from that.

Dr. Dave: There you go. You've got the Naropa Institute there, right?

Ronscavage: Yes. We do.

Dr. Dave: Yep and a lot of probably very interesting counter-cultural psychological personal growth kinds of things going and I'm particularly—I've been involved in that aspect of psychology and so I have lots of contacts in that world. But I hope also to reach out beyond my own circle of friends and biases and to talk to psychologists of every stripe.

Ronscavage: That's great. Well, I thank you for doing this interview with me and it's been a pleasure.

Dr. Dave: Well, I'm thrilled to do it. I think what you're doing for your students is really wonderful and I hope they appreciate the enthusiasm and dedication that you bring to it. I'm sure they do because from my years of teaching, I think the thing that students appreciate more than anything else is enthusiasm.

Ronscavage: Well, good. Thank you very much. That's a big compliment. And let's talk later. I'd love to interview on some different topics.

Dr. Dave: Sounds good to me.

Ronscavage: And your website is—

Dr. Dave: Oh, good. www.ShrinkRapRadio.com and Rap is spelled R,A,P.

Ronscavage: Perfect and you're also available on the iTunes music store as well?

Dr. Dave: That's right. They would have to go to the music store and then go to the little block where you can search on a name and if they type in Shrink Rap Radio, I'll come up and they can subscribe and hear all the shows that are coming up.

Ronscavage: Well, that's great and, again, I thank you and I hope that we can talk soon.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Those were my thoughts on altered states of consciousness during the interview. Of course, the very fact of being interviewed induces an altered state of self consciousness in which I'm likely forget some of the major points I want to make. In fact, there are a couple of things I would have liked to have mentioned. The first is that Dr. Ron Alexander whom I hope to interview sometime soon, he and I have been doing an annual week-long personal growth shop. And we've been doing these in exotic locales such as Kauai, Mallorca and, most recently, Switzerland and next semester, we will do one in Tuscany. One of the tools we use in these workshops is a hypnotic dual induction technique. We learned this from Bandler and Grinder, two of the pioneers of an approach called Neuro-Linguistic Programming. In the dual induction hypnotic technique, someone will volunteer to work on a personal issue and then we seat that person between the two of us. Ron will speak into one ear and I will speak into the other so that one of us is speaking to the unconscious mind and one of us is speaking to the conscious mind. We speak very metaphorically. It's hard for the person to follow it all consciously and they are forced to pretty much give up and let our positive suggestions sink in. It's an interesting and dramatic technique and the recipients of it usually feel that it was of great value to them. The other thing I would have liked to have mentioned is in relation to dreamwork. In the interview, I spoke about the *if this were my dream* technique. Usually this is done in small dream sharing groups. If any of you are interested in exploring your dreams, I would recommend you get together with three to five of your best friends, get that Jeremy Taylor book I recommended and meet weekly or once every two weeks for dream sharing. And, by the way, Jeremy Taylor is a friend and I hope to have him on the show soon. Now we come to the point where I usually plead to receive some emails from you listeners. This has been a red-letter week because I received the first piece of international mail. It comes from James F. in the UK.

He [James F.] writes: Hello, Dr. Dave. I am an avid listener of the show from Halesworth in Suffolk, which is in England. I think your show covers some really great aspects of psychology and I especially like your questions on how members of the psychology community got interested in psychology. I do have a question for you as I am a psychology graduate who became very disillusioned with psychology halfway through my psychology degree to the almost rigorous scientific and mathematical boundaries placed on students. By this, I mean psychology in recent times, I believe, is strangling itself with statistical information and experimental designs. Perhaps psychology should remind itself why it is such a fantastic subject as Social Psychology tends to excite interested undergraduates far more than, say, Cognitive Neuroscience, which has an important place in psychology. The question that I hear a lot is, “How can you measure psychology?” as most people believe that psychology contains no tangible evidence as many processes are intrapersonal. Are we to become hooked on becoming a single measurable device for every aspect of psychology? I love psychology as much now as when I first started and I soon found ways of loving psychology again during my degree. I wonder if you could shed some light on some of my views. You have a great show and many people listen to it. Keep up the good work. All the best, James.

Dr. Dave: Well, James, thank you so much for that feedback. It is greatly appreciated. I would have to agree with you that many undergraduates are turned off by the amount of emphasis that is placed on measurement and the scientific approach. I do believe, as I’ve said in the past, that those approaches are important and have their place, but they’re not everybody’s cup of tea. That’s for sure. There’s been a long-standing joke among some psychologists that psychology has traditionally suffered from physics envy and that, of course, is a reference to all the emphasis on measurement and trying to become a “true science.” There’s quite a bit of psychological research that does involve measurement. There are a lot of psychological processes that have been measured, that can be replicated that meet the standards of natural science. At the same time though, we have to recognize that there are many dimensions of human experience that do not easily submit themselves to measurement but nevertheless exist, are worthy of our interest and our study and our curiosity. Well, I wonder if there are other international listeners out there. I wouldn’t be surprised if there were. I’m hoping that our listenership

will grow. I'm hoping you're telling your friends about the show. As usual, we would love to hear from you. Send your emails or mp3 audio comments to Shrink@ShrinkRapRadio.com. Our show notes are at www.ShrinkRapRadio.com and, if you're using Skype or Gizmo Project, our name is ShrinkPod. You can leave messages or questions using the built-in recorder on Gizmo Project. We could turn this into kind of a call-in show where people call in with personal issues that they'd like advice on from a psychologist. I think that could be an interesting direction for us to go. We could mix that in with the current format so you might keep that in mind. Another element that I would like to add to the show is what is being called podsafesafe music and there is a website called the podsafesafe music network where musicians are posting their music, some of it very wonderful, to make it available to podcasters. So after the usual closing music of the show, I will play one piece of podcastsafesafe music which I think has some psychological relevance. Today's tune is called *Upside Down*. I think *Upside Down*, in fact, fits in with our theme of altered states of consciousness very well because when you're upside down, you're taking a different view of things. And sometimes our world needs to be turned upside down in order to motivate growth and change. Oh and I forgot to mention, if you are enjoying our podcast, please rate us on the Yahoo directory at podcast.yahoo.com and on the Odeo directory at www.Odeo.com and if you go to our web page at www.ShrinkRapRadio.com and look at the Shows link, there's a place there where you can cast a vote on podcast alley. So, that's it for now. This is Dr. Dave reminding you, it's all in your mind.