

# INTERVIEW WITH A HYPNOTHERAPIST: PAST-LIFE REGRESSION

BY KAREN FRAZIER

**H**ypnoterapy, the practice of treating a symptom, disease, or addiction by means of hypnotism, is said to modify a subject's behavior, emotional content, and attitudes. Often, patients seek treatment for a wide range of conditions, including dysfunctional habits, anxiety, stress-related illness, pain management, and personal development.

Another possible application for hypnotherapy is past-life regression (also known as PLR).

PLR is deemed by many hypnotherapists to be a journey into one's past lives while hypnotized. The practice, while controversial to some, has been studied by therapists and doctors since the 1950s. In fact, many current-day therapists are convinced that hypnosis opens a window to the unconscious mind to reveal memories of past lives.

Rita Ballard, CHT, is a consulting hypnotherapist and comfort therapist in Chehalis, Washington. She received her training through the Threshold University of Mind/Body Science in 1997.

I recently underwent a PLR hypnosis session with Ballard (see "A Peek Into the Past" on page 36), and afterward, she graciously agreed to sit down with me for an interview about PLR hypnotherapy.

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**Q: What are the education requirements for hypnotherapy?**

*Ballard:* All that's required to practice hypnosis in this state [Washington] is that you register with the state. The rules are different depending on where you live. There are three states that have really rigorous requirements.



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**Q: What is your education?**

*Ballard:* I took a training that was four or five months long. It was 150 hours. Then I joined the National Guild of Hypnotists, which is the

biggest international hypnosis association. Through there, you are required to have continuing education credits.

**Q: Why did you want to become a hypnotherapist?**

*Ballard:* All my life I've been fascinated with how the brain works and why. Why is a big question for me.

**Q: Have you gotten any answers?**

*Ballard:* Yes — some answers. Mostly esoteric. I think there's a lot more that we don't use that you work with in hypnosis. I've also discovered answers to why not. It's because people are comfortable where they are. If you can get them to believe in something better, if they can feel the results of that belief, then hypnosis will work.

**Q: What is the most common reason that people seek hypnotherapy?**

*Ballard:* Probably the most common reason would be to quit smoking.

**Q: What is your success rate with that?**

*Ballard:* I would say that it is absolutely dependent on the person's commitment to succeed. My rate is about 50/50.



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**Q: Does it work because people are suggestible?**

*Ballard:* It works because of a person's desire. It works with your ability to believe what you tell it — I guess that is suggestion. You could say to a person, "I don't know how soon you'll quit smoking, but you do." It's entirely up to them.

**Q: Do you do much PLR?**

*Ballard:* Not a lot. It is one of the things that I love, but I don't get to do a lot of it.

**Q: I noticed that you worked from a script when you regressed me. Do you always work from a script?**

*Ballard:* I use standard scripts that I will alter according to the person. Sometimes I change it as I go along.

**Q: What reasons do people give for wanting PLR?**

*Ballard:* Curiosity. A long time ago, I had a guy who kept getting these feelings of guilt, and he thought it was related to possibly him having committed a murder in a past life. Unfortunately, he tried three times to discover it and couldn't do it. I think he was blocking something.

**Q: Any other clients that you can tell me about?**

*Ballard:* One client that really sticks

out prominently is a guy who was a woman. He was a woman of higher class who had never been married. She/he died from her house burning down.

**Q: If people have died traumatically in a past life, do they carry it with them?**

*Ballard:* Some people experience pain, but go to a doctor and can find no reason for the pain. They could possibly discover that it was from a past life.

For instance, if someone had a pain in their side, they might discover they were killed by a spear to the side in a past life.



**Q: Can you take somebody to where they want to go – to a certain moment in a past life?**

*Ballard:* Yes, I can take them to the beginning of a specific fear or feeling.

**Q: Do most people seeking PLR have a strong belief that it will work?**

*Ballard:* Most people do, yes. I think it's really hard to get someone in here for a PLR if they don't believe it intellectually.

**Q: If people believe that PLR doesn't work, will they still be able to experience a past life during regression?**

*Ballard:* The expectation of the outcome is a large part of the experience.

**Q: Have you ever had PLR?**

*Ballard:* Yes. It was during class. I find myself to be a little more resistant than I like. I think my mind doesn't shut off.

**Q: Any past-life experiences you want to share with me?**

*Ballard:* I personally didn't see anything, although I've gone to people who have told me about past lives I've had.

**Q: Can people hypnotize themselves to do PLR?**

*Ballard:* All hypnosis is self-hypnosis. You could make a recording of your session and make a recording just of the parts I did, and then use it to regress yourself.

**Q: What are your thoughts regarding cryptomnesia?**

*Ballard:* You can't debunk the whole science because of a few instances.

If a person is engaged in a PLR in a pure and honest way, then you will get pure and honest results.

I think most people would be more likely to remember nothing than to make things up.

**Q: What would you say to skeptics?**

*Ballard:* Probably what I would say is, "You don't know until you've tried it."

Sometimes even after we've tried it, we don't know. Nothing ventured, nothing gained – and it's worth it to do.



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**Q: Do you believe in reincarnation?**

*Ballard:* I definitely do.

**Q: What do you think is the purpose of being able to recall past lives?**

*Ballard:* I don't know that it is

purpose-driven. Tapping into what we call past and future, I consider to be a seed of now.

I don't think there's a purpose. I think it's an ability that we all have but just don't use.

**Q: You mentioned the future. Can you take people forward in hypnosis?**

*Ballard:* Yes. I have taken people forward. We call it future progression. Sometimes you want to have people see themselves five years in the future as a non-smoker or two years in the future being thin and healthy.

It's a visualization tool. I don't see it as being any different than PLR.

**Q: I've seen hypnotherapists on TV, and they have people on stage who are fully aware. The hypnotherapist pops them on the head, and they are out. Are those people pre-hypnotized?**

*Ballard:* Those hypnotists are trained at being extremely skilled at picking out people in the audience who will be the most susceptible – through body language, posture, and other things.

Instant induction – I don't use it – it works on the element of surprise. It alters that person's train of thought. The element of surprise switches that person's brain waves into what you see as trance.

**Q: When someone is hypnotized, what part of the person do you think is talking to you?**

*Ballard:* I don't think it's their brain. I think it is a combination of other things – their higher self, feelings, and emotions. Probably 90% is feelings and emotions.

**Q: Have you ever had a client whom you felt was making it all up during hypnosis?**

*Ballard:* One time, there was one person who I wondered whether or not she was just going along with it.

It seemed too quick and easy that she would access certain things on prompting. She was a repeat for almost a year, so in retrospect, she might not have been making it up.

**Q: When you've done PLR with people, do they often see people they recognize from this life?**

*Ballard:* Nobody's ever told me they have. Probably most people don't because we have so many filters in place.

**Q: I answered, "I don't know" a few times during my session. Is that common?**

*Ballard:* Yes, that is fairly typical. Sometimes we don't know; we can look right at it and not know.

**Q: I really questioned the authenticity of some of the memories I had during my PLR – even from this life. Is that common?**

*Ballard:* Oh yes – very common. And it really doesn't matter. If it was a genuine memory and there was something that they need to get, then they will get it. It could be symbolic; symbolism works.

**Q: What do you believe it is that is being accessed during PLR?**

*Ballard:* I think people are accessing their own past lives. I think it would be really difficult to access someone

else's memories or the collective unconscious.

**Q: Do you think that we are the same soul in every life?**

*Ballard:* The essence of you lives on. It's like there's a balloon filled with water, and the balloon bursts and drops of water splatter everywhere.

Each drop is a soul – it is part of the contents of the balloon, but it is individual, as well.

**Q: How do you avoid asking leading questions?**

*Ballard:* What I do is constantly remember that this is not about me at all. It is totally about the person sitting there. I won't ask questions

like "would you," "did you," or "can you."

They have to be open-ended questions where the person can gather information instead of taking information I've given and expanding on it. They have to be pure thoughts.

**Q: Any books or authors that**

**you'd recommend?**

*Ballard:* *Remarkable Healings* by Shankuntala Modi, MD.

**Q: Is there anything else you'd like people to know about PLR?**

*Ballard:* I think if a person is curious but skeptical, they ought to try it.

They have nothing to lose and nothing to fear. ♦

Rita Ballard is located in Chehalis, Washington. You can visit her Web site at [www.ritaballard.com](http://www.ritaballard.com).

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## RECOMMENDED READING

*Old Souls*  
– by Tom Schroder

*Remarkable Healings*  
– by Shankuntala Modi

*Children's Past Lives: How Past Life Memories Affect Your Child*  
– by Carol Bowman

*Someone Else's Yesterday: The Confederate General and Connecticut Yankee – A Past Life Remembered*  
– by Jeffrey Keene

*Many Lives, Many Masters: The True Story of a Prominent Psychiatrist, His Young Patient, and the Past Life Therapy That Changed Both Their Lives*  
– by Brian Weiss

*Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*  
– by Ian Stevenson

*Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects*  
– by Ian Stevenson

*Journey of Souls: Case Studies of Life Between Lives*  
– by Michael Newton

*Courageous Souls: Do We Plan Our Life Challenges Before Birth?*  
– by Robert Schwartz

*Reincarnation & Karma*  
– by Edgar Cayce

*One Soul, Many Lives: First Hand Stories of Reincarnation and the Striking Evidence of Past Lives*  
– by Roy Stenman

*Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery: An East-West Dialogue on Death and Rebirth From the Worlds of Religion, Science, Psychology, Philosophy*  
– by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston