

Archives of the Impossible, Rice University
Oral history interview of Dr. Stanley Krippner, online via Zoom
Interviewers: Learned Foote and Christopher Senn, Houston, Texas
Interview date: February 26, 2021
Duration: 01:18:47

Learned Foote: Okay, it's, we have started.

Christopher Senn: All right. So, Dr. Krippner, you've donated such a large collection to us, here at Rice, and we're –

Dr. Krippner: Yes, and there is more to come.

Christopher Senn: I'm glad to hear that. And, and we're very grateful for all of that. And you, much of this material has regarded the subjects of parapsychology, and shamanism, and you've written quite a bit about how you were first introduced to the topic, and what did you – if you could think back on that, whenever you first came to the topic – what did you find so captivating about these topics and when did you know that you wanted this to be your life work?

Dr. Krippner: Well, this is a good question, and I think you can also ask the question about some of my other fields of interest because they all date back many, many decades; sometimes my childhood. And they weren't really recent developments. I had just built on my experience. In terms of parapsychology, that goes back to my childhood in Wisconsin when I was about 11 or 12 years of age, and remember, though, that I was born during the Great Depression. And my father was a farmer and had an apple orchard. Didn't have much money. My aunt was making a living by selling World Book Encyclopedia. This was before the Internet, so this was a wonderful source of information. I wanted a set, but this whole set cost \$100, which at that time was a small fortune, and, of course, my parents could not afford it. And I was so eager to learn and enjoyed new information voraciously and I went up to my room, I was actually in tears, and then the thought hit me: I have one rich relative, and maybe he can buy those for me. And that's my Uncle Max in Madison, Wisconsin who was an official in a dairy company, and then had I thought no, this won't work out because Uncle Max is dead. I don't know how that thought entered my mind, but as soon as I thought it, there was a scream, and I went downstairs and my mother was on the telephone with my cousin – her father, Uncle Max, had just died of a heart attack. Actually, it was years before I shared that, and now, of course, I've written about it, I've let the family know it's not that big of a deal anymore because this type of experience is the type of experience that parapsychologists have built on throughout the years. Well, this is my origin of interest in parapsychology, and again when I was that age, there was a very popular radio show – these were the days before television – and one of them was a weekly show The Amazing Dunninger. Now Dunninger was what we call a mentalist. He did this show and did very, very sophisticated readings of people in the audience. He could predict newspaper headlines in advance. He could apparently transfer thoughts through space. Of course, all of this was sleight of hand. I didn't know it at the time. To me, it sounded like the real thing. So I tuned in every night, and this is what kept my interest going. Parenthetically, I actually met the great Dunninger years later in the magic show that a friend of mine had taken me to and

Dunninger was in the front row along with us. Quite a completion of the circle. I get to the University of Wisconsin and I become chair of the student forum committee that invited guests, and we had numerous distinguished people. Again, many of them you will not have heard the, the most illuminating person, of course, was Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect, but also various people in public life and literary life, and I wanted to invite Dunninger. And the, another member of our committee said, "Oh, well, don't you know that's all sleight of hand. He's not really reading people's minds." And then he began to explain it to me how some of these feats were done. Oh my god, of course, we can't invite him, but like a magic show. We could invite him if this was a magician, but as a self-styled mentalist, can't do it. Well, I told this story to my philosophy professor, Dr. Campbell Garnet, and he said, "Well, you know, there is scientific work being done along these lines at Duke University in North Carolina with J.B. Rhine and his wife Louisa Rhine." So we invited J.B. Rhine to speak. As the uproar, it was almost as bad as if we'd invited Dunninger. The psychology department was viciously opposed to that, and, again, I have written about this in great detail, one professor said, "If you invite J.B. Rhine to speak on parapsychology, you should now invite Father Divine to speak on the science of healing." Father Divine was a famous black healer in those days. And we invited him and said, "Well, look, we don't have much money. We cannot get a subsidy from the university as we usually do." And he said, "If you can pay my airplane, my railroad fare from Chicago where I'll be speaking to the American Chemical Society to Madison and back, that'll be fine." So this is what we did. And then another professor of psychology told his students, "Well, if you want to hear about parapsychology, you can hear it from the – I think it's a lot of bullshit, but if you want to do it, you can hear it firsthand from the biggest ass of them all – J.B. Rhine." Now interestingly enough, the two professors that raised the objections, I ran into years later – didn't mention our history together, but I had in one case a cordial relationship with the professor, and in the other case, I had a nice conversation with the professor who had just been elected president of the American Psychological Association. No, I didn't tell them about the past history, but once I invited J.B. Rhine, he invited me to North Carolina, and after graduate school at Northwest University where I graduated in 1961, I took him up on it and went to North Carolina and I was able to stay with J.B. and Louisa Rhine at their farmhouse and I could see that he was really eager to get me involved in the field. Well, I had an appointment at Kent State University and the Child Study Center, which did diagnostic and remedial work for learning disability children, and so I just let that play itself out, but I'd still visit from time to time. And then in New York City, Montague Ullman, who was a distinguished psychoanalyst at the time, got a grant from a private foundation to set up a dream laboratory for research on ESP and dreams. Now, several people, eminent people in that field, turned him down because the grant was only for 2 years. I was about fifth or sixth per, person on the list, and I jumped at the chance. I left behind a very fine position at Kent State University. I could have gotten tenure; I could have been happily retired, and all of that, and I was taking a chance. But we stretched out the 2 years to 10 years. And within that 10-year period of time, we produced literally hundreds of articles and ran a couple of dozen experiments, and then, I know this is going too long, but I'll give you the final result – of course we were attacked by a lot of mainstream psychology people and the main reason is while we don't see anything wrong with your experimental design, but you cannot replicate it. If that can't be replicated, we can't take it seriously. Two years, two weeks ago, the International Journal of Dream Research ran an article on method analysis of all of the dream ESP work that had been done over the past 50 years, starting with the Maimonides work. The replications were actually statistically significant. So, yes, it was repeated. It was repeated in

several laboratories, mainly in the United Kingdom, and they looked back over all of the work – Maimonides was significantly at a somewhat higher level but the replications, replication was also significant. They awarded a score of 1 to 5, 5 being the best experiments; 1 being the weakest experiment still publishable but not as strong, and I was happy to see that some of the experiments that I had designed almost 50 years earlier were actually in the top 4, 4 of 5. So, that sort of gives you that particular history. Now, of course, I was involved in several other parapsychological ventures, but your question was how did it all get started. The answer is it started with the unfortunate death of my Uncle Max and my reaction to it.

Learned Foote: That was such a great answer, and it touched on some of the many fields that you've been involved in, parapsychology and learning disabilities. You talked about the beginning of your work there. And I wonder since we're asking about origins, we've talked about, there's other aspects of the fields that you've worked in, such as hypnosis, creativity, and even PTSD – although we'll get to that a little bit later. But thinking about creativity and shamanism, did those interests also start at the same time or was it over the course of your career, you're sort of moving into different fields?

Dr. Krippner: No, it started differently. But, again, all of those could date back to my childhood interestingly enough. The interest in shamanism came from the fact that our farm was, contained an Indian mound and I could actually find arrowheads if I dug a little deep in those mounds. My father – this was the days before tractors – his horse and plow plowed up the earth and sometimes he found arrowheads, so I had a nice arrowhead collection. And then years later when my sister came into the family, I share the arrowheads with her. Well, it got be interested in terms of the tribe that lived in the Pottawattamie Indians, so I did a lot of reading about Native Americans. Then, of course, in reading about Native Americans, I ran into the work that medicine people and shamans had done. So this is my background and once I was professionally involved at, Maimonides Medical Center, I had an invitation to appear at a panel in Buffalo, New York – The Human Dimensions Institute – and one of the people on the panel was ***** – a Seneca Indian shaman. So this is my first meeting with an actual shaman. And that solidified my interest in the area, and again, this is going to go on too long, but I can't help it. So another coincidence, I had a friend who took me to a concert by Ravi Shankar back in the early 1960s, the famous sitar virtuoso from India, and he was accompanied by ***** and Alla Rakha. Alla Rakha on the tabla. Now one of the volunteers at our dream laboratory who we used in our experiments – Jean Molay – was the girlfriend of Alla Rakha. His American wife, as he said it. And she invited me to a party for him after another one of the concerts. So he asked my friend and I and my two stepchildren, we went to the concert and then the walking distance to the apartment of Jean Molay and Alla Rakha and he said, "By the way, there's a musician, a student of Alla Rakha who's coming tonight, and he wants to talk to you about hypnosis." I said, "Fine." So halfway through the party, in came the musicians – the Grateful Dead drummer, Mickey Hart – very dramatic with a black ponytail and a red, a black and white checkered suit, and he was a student of Alla Rakha. He was learning to play tabla. He was a master percussionist. So he said, "I wanted to talk to you about hypnosis." So we went into one of the adjoining rooms, and I found out that he, he could play many instruments. He could play guitar among other things. He had students. And he would have them relax, close their eyes and imagine that they were playing, and he wanted to find out if there was any danger in any of this. And I said, "No, this is a type of image rehearsal that's often done in hypnosis. Just make sure that you catch them if

they seem to be going too deeply, and then you rouse them. You don't want to get to the, anything that you cannot handle." And he was just about to go, and then almost as an afterthought, he – "By the way, you like rock music?" "Oh, yes," I said, "I like rock, rock music. Just last night I went to hear the Grateful Dead perform at Fillmore in, in New York City." He, "Well, then you heard me play." So then it turns out that I had met Mickey Hart, one of the two drummers for the Grateful Dead. And as time went on, Mickey Hart said, "You know, we know a medicine man by the name of Rolling Thunder, and I'd like you to meet him." And he had a private plan pick up Rolling Thunder and bring him to one of the gigs that the Grateful Dead was doing. That's how I met Rolling Thunder, who I worked with for the rest of his life and now his grandson and I have written two books about Rolling Thunder. And then, of course, after Rolling Thunder, opened the door to meeting a number of other Native American medicine men and medicine women, and over the years, I probably have interviewed about 100. Sometimes not very long interviews and sometimes very lengthy interviews and observations, but this led, of course, to a whole plethora of articles with a book about shamanism, including an article in psychology, in the American Psychologist, which was the flagship journal to the American Psychological Association, and that article perspectives on shamanism, old and new, has been cited many, many times, as the, probably the first major psychological discussion of shamanism to appear in a psychological journal. So, there's a capsule summary of how I got interested in shamanism. Okay, now, I'll tell you how I got interested in learning disabilities. When I was in school, I had a frontal lisp. I would talk like this. I could not pronounce my S's very well. My tongue was between my teeth. And I enjoyed speaking and back in those days, people were making too much of a fuss about it, but then I was in a speech contest – Professor Haberman from the University of Wisconsin came to our school, and he was a judge for the contest. And he took me aside, and he said, "You know, you are lisping, and I will teach you how to correct your lisp. You keep your tongue behind your teeth." That's all it took. Instant therapy. So I spoke without a lisp. I won several speaking contests. And then this naturally took me into the field of speech therapy, which was my major at the University of Wisconsin, and later in University, Northwest University, learning disabilities, and again, I have several articles on that topic and began to give workshops on the topic. Again, I was getting a fine reputation because back in those days, I felt that most, almost all learning disabilities were neurologically based. I was a very, very early advocate of neurological science and psychoneurology. And that approach was sort of unique and so I did get invited to a number of lectures and workshops and articles on the top of learning disabilities and then that sort of coincided with my interest in creativity because when I was directing the Child Study Center at Kent State University, we also were interviewing parents who had gifted and talented children; not as many as learning disability people, but then this led to a whole series of articles about creativity and just recently the third encyclopedia of creativity was published and I have two articles in the encyclopedia: one about creativity in dreams and one about creativity in altered states, such as psychedelics. So again, my interest in those fields goes way back as I am still active in those fields. Okay, we've knocked a few questions off the list, what do you wanna hear about next?

Christopher Senn: Well, I would ask just a follow-up question from, to that one very briefly. if you could discuss – and I know this is very broad, but, if you could discuss how did your, perspective shift over the years in, in some of the fields that you just addressed?

Dr. Krippner: Well, of course, they fit in a number of ways. In the first place, everything that I'm interested in psychology is sort of an anomaly. It's a little bit off the beaten path. It's not mainstream learning theory. It certainly is not psychopathology because I ****, and so I sort of, if you want to use a metaphor, was planting the flag of psychology in areas that had not previously been explored, at least not in depth. And again, I don't claim to be the only person that forged the way, but I was certainly in the front rank of several people who forged the way. And also there was another motive – I did not like to see people stigmatized because of their differences. And I noted over the years, yes, learning disability children being stigmatized, creative children begin stigmatized, and people with PTSD were being stigmatized. People, all these outlier groups, I felt that the research would give them sort of a cache of acceptability and bring them more into the mainstream of concern and stop them from doubting themselves and questioning themselves. So, which in some cases, led to suicide and, of course, suicide is the topic which just came out, and this is the only book on suicide, which is a textbook that talks about how the body experiences near death experiences, after death communication, and some of parapsychological interests. And, of course, there's a lot about PTSD in the book, and my interest in post traumatic stress disorder goes back to my childhood. I had a cousin by the name of Marcia Gates, who was quite a livewire, cheerful, happy, and then she was, went to war. She was a member of the Nurses Corp. She was in the Philippines when the Japanese came. She was imprisoned, dreadfully treated, almost starved to death for years, and then, of course, she was liberated when MacArthur came in and drove the Japanese out of the Philippines. She came back to the United States. She was not the same. She was sad, morose, all of her spark had sort of gone. I didn't realize it at the time, but she had post traumatic stress disorder. So years later when I started to read about PTSD, I said, oh my god, this is what's happened to Marcia Gates – no longer with us, but, much to my delight, her hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin now has a Marcia Gates Veterans Center in her honor, and another distant relative of my has written a whole biography about Marcia Gates, and I have certainly mentioned her in many of my particular, books and articles about post traumatic stress disorder. And, of course, that coincided nicely my interest in dreams because I have done a number of articles on post traumatic stress disorder nightmares, and in our suicide book, we say treat the nightmares first before the rest of the PTSD symptoms. Once people are able to have dreams that do not rehash their trauma, they're on the road to recovery. So, that sort of answers that question for you. Now, while we're on a roll, I'll give you the origins of my interest in psychedelics. That goes back to 1957. Life magazine had an issue in which there was a feature article on the Magic Mushrooms of Mexico. It turns out that Gordon Wasson, who is a prominent banker in Boston, and also an amateur mycologist a specialist in mushrooms – along with his wife, had heard rumors that the mushroom ceremonies were still being performed underground in Oaxaca, Mexico. Now when the Spaniards came into Mexico and saw the Indians taking mushrooms and morning glory seeds and other psychedelics, oh, "This is the work of the devil. They claim they're talking to god, no they're talking to the devil." And they banned them. They persecuted people who were doing this work. It only survived in about two places: One was the wheat shoals on the other side of the country. They were in the mountains and the Spaniards didn't think it was worth to track them down. And the other one was in Oaxaca, where it simply went underground, and the woman who was featured in the Life magazine article was Maria Sedina. She has an assumed name in the, in the article, but she was tracked down. Well, first of all, years later, I had a chance to meet Wasson because he spoke in Boston, and I flew up for the dedication of his book Soma in which he lays out his whole theory about the magic mushrooms

and how that **** for yoga and was celebrated in the, in many of the early writings from India, found this fascinating. And my interest in psychedelics also goes back to early 1960s, if I remember correctly, when Timothy Leary spoke on the topic at the American Psychological Association. This was before he left the establishment, left academia, and went off to become a pop guru for better or for worse. While I was sitting on the radiator, the room was packed, and I was fascinated to hear him speak, and he had some other people on the panel, William Burroughs who is the famous beat poet, Gerald Heard, wonderful writer, and on the topic, and so I had a friend at Harvard – Steve Klineberg, now an eminent social psychologist at Rice University. And I said, "Steve, I want you to volunteer for the psilocybin research which Leary is doing, and if you come through it okay, say that you have a friend who would like to join." So this is what Steve did. And so he has a worthwhile experience, and then he asked me to write to Leary, which I did, and Leary said he'd be happy to interview me. So I flew to Boston and went to Harvard. Had my appointment with Tim Leary, and he's, "You're just the type of person we want on the experiment. And by the way, I'm having a dinner for Alan Watts tonight. Would you like to come?" I said, "I'd be delighted." This is how I met Alan Watts, who later became a very close friend of mine. And so I went with Leary to the dinner and then afterwards Leary dropped me off at Steve's apartment. This was a potluck dinner and somebody had brought something that was contaminated. I got dreadfully sick that night. I was heaving all night long and Steve said, "I don't think you should take psilocybin tomorrow." "Oh no, I'm not gonna miss it." And so I was heaving and throwing up, aching, and in pain. I said, "Steve, I have to have an interview with the graduate students in charge of the program. Bring me to the room and just leave me there and come back in an hour. If I get to the room before they get there, they won't know that I'm incapable of walking." So, ***** came to interview me and it all went well. As soon as they left, I ran to the bathroom and threw up. She came and picked me up. That evening we went to the apartment where the psilocybin was waiting. Tim Leary gave me the psilocybin and then he went off for a conference with the local police because already his work was getting illegal attention. As soon as I took the psilocybin, all my symptoms vanished, and I had a very memorable experience. Tying in with the parapsychology, one of the images I had on psilocybin was President Kennedy being shot, and, unfortunately, that did take place several months later. Well, I remained interested in psilocybin and other psychedelics and then at a shamanism conference in Switzerland, I had the great opportunity to meet Albert Hofmann, who discovered LSD. Albert Hofmann and I became close friends, and I visited him at his home in Switzerland. That's quite a story, which I don't have time to go into, but nobody knew his address. Otherwise, he would be deluged with well wishes. So my German friends and I drove to Basel and then phoned Albert. He gave us directions and then we followed the directions and found his lovely home right on the edge of a beautiful forest. He was very much attuned to nature. And then, of course, we didn't know it at the time, but the City of Basel arranged to have a 100th birthday party for Albert. And much to my surprise, I was invited to give not one, not two, but three lectures. what could I do? I took one of the lectures, and I said, "You know, there are several people who are not invited, and I'm gonna have them share this slot with me." And this gave me a chance to bring in a woman of color and two men of color, all of whom had excellent credentials and who had actually done psilocybin or LSD research, and this gave them their moment in the sun, so to speak. Well, that's the last time I saw Albert, but I do have a memorable photo of him, and he actually drew the LSD molecule for me, and wrote out "To my good friend, Stanley Krippner" and signed it Albert Hofmann. This is priceless. It's a gem. I'd like to show it to people, but I'm so afraid that somebody will steal it, that I keep a close watch

on it, and so I've been in numerous forums on psychedelics over the years, and, of course, Tim Leary, with his, "Tune in and drop out", motto left the establishment and became for better or for worse a hero of the counterculture, I was not sympathetic to what he did, but we remained friends on top of it all. My philosophy is once you love somebody, once you become a close friend of somebody, you accept them with all their infirmities. Now, this has gotten me into trouble over the years. I've remained loyal to some people who have done some really outrageous things. Like Tim Leary. But after Tim got out of prison, we met again. We were on a panel at the University in Southern California, and he knew everything that I had been doing for the last several years. I said, "Tim, how did you know all of these?" "Well, when you're in jail you don't have nothing to do but read." So he was up to date on a lot of my activities. And, of course, then I met Ralph Baxter who I was close friends with until his passing and also Ram Dass and that whole crew at Harvard. Actually, I have written a couple of seminal articles on psychedelics, mainly psychedelics and creativity. This brings me to creativity again. And my article on psychedelics and creative art and music was the last iteration published in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology about 2 years ago. Again, another little capsule summary, but there you are.

Learned Foote: I just wanted to, to follow up on something that you said in your, in a previous answer and then connect it to a different question, which is that you mentioned doing work for vulnerable communities, that might not be able to have a voice necessarily, especially in, I'm thinking about research that you did in the 1970s, regarding trans people and dreams, and I'm curious as to, what motivated you to do that research in the 1970s, and you've now, it seems like, come back to that and looking in retrospect on that dream analysis that you did in the '70s. So I'm just curious if you can talk about that experience in looking at trans people and their dreams and how that impacted your work?

Dr. Krippner: Okay, I don't know if I understood you, are we talking about trans people?

Learned Foote: Yes, and the research you did –

Dr. Krippner: Okay.

Learned Foote: – in the '70s. and now looking back in retrospect on it.

Dr. Krippner: Yes. Well, remember we had a dream laboratory and we did a couple of other dreams. We did one of the first content analysis studies of pregnancy dreams. We didn't have people come into the laboratory, we went and interviewed pregnant woman and followed them through, but also, we did the first dream study on transsexual, now called transgender, and this came about through my friendship with Harry Benjamin. Harry Benjamin was the innovator of the sex reassignment operation. And he let me interview about a dozen male-to-female trans people and I got a nice collection of dreams, and remember that one of my interests in dreams is gender differences. I have published an article about gender differences from half a dozen different countries. And this involves using the Hall Van de Castle Content Analysis Scale, so there are so-called typical female dreams, so-called typical male dreams. The trans dreams came right smack in the middle. Half of the content was similar to male dreams; half was similar to female dreams. And so, it is like Alfred Adler said many years ago, "Dream life mirrors waking

life." And the article that we did on trans dreams again was a pioneering effort. I have, I'm not a clinician, so I have not done actual research or counseling along these lines, and of course, trans people are very much in the news right now. I, again, I don't want to go off on tangents, but I'm actually appalled at people who opt for the operation immediately, especially teenagers, which is completely off the wall as far as I am concerned. Harry Benjamin had his people cross dress for 1 year and then start taking hormones the second year and then have operations the third year. And at any point along the way they might change their mind. Some people simply grow out of this fixation, and this is what I'm afraid is going to happen to some of the teenagers who identify as trans and don't realize their brains are not fully formed. Their brains are not fully formed until they're about 21 or 22 years of age. And so I've, I followed this field up, and again, not being a clinician, I haven't done much writing on this, but I have done some consultations in the field over the years. Now, how did I meet Harry Benjamin? Well, years ago, I had a friend in Hawaii – oh good heavens, I don't want this to be too long. When I was at Northwestern University, I hung out with a lot of Filipinos. And I introduced a friend of mine to this Filipino and she ended up marrying one of them. So, of course, I was invited to the wedding, which was gonna be in Hawaii. Her father had donated his house to the newlywed couple, and they had a guest room where I could stay and seeing that I was going to be in Hawaii, Gardner Murphy, who I met through my parapsychology connections – one of the most eminent psychologists of the 20th century – "Oh, you can be research assistant. I'm going to be teaching there in the summer." Great opportunity. Wonderful opportunity. And so the International Conference on General Somatics was meeting in Hawaii late in the summer. I took a course on general somatics, the study of the meaning of words at University of Wisconsin, one of the best courses I ever had. And so, Hayakawa was one of the guest professors along with Gardner Murphy, along with Anatol Rapoport of Game Theory fame, by the way and so that's where I got to meet Hayakawa and participated in the somatic conference speaking on psychedelics and psychedelics and somatics and how the meaning of words, and the map is not a territory, ties in with some of the insights you get under psychedelics. Well, I was invited to give the same presentation a year later in New York City at another general somatics convention and after I gave the talk, a woman came running up to me on her cane, and flopping hat and said, "I love your talk. Do you know Timothy Leary? Do you know Alan Watts?" And I said, "Well, I know Timothy Leary. I've met Alan Watts, but I don't know him very well." She said, "Well, I know them both." That's how I met Virginia Glenn, and she was legally blind, but was an early leader in this Human Potential Movement. She is the one who introduced to me humanistic psychology. She invited me to a humanistic psychology meeting, which preceded the psychology, the APA meeting, and this is my induction into the field of humanistic psychology. And it was Virginia who introduced me to Zelda Suplee who is a pioneer in American Nudist Movement. She made one of the very first films on nudism. It was a very wholesome film, by the way, it was not pornographic at all. And I got to see it years later at a, a special showing. And it was Zelda who I had in mind when I met – I was talking to Robert Masters and Jean Houston because they had a book Psychedelic Art and they had invited me to write the chapter on psychedelic artists because I had polled almost 200 artists and musicians who had taken psychedelics, and so Robert Masters and Jean Houston and I were very close. Jean Houston and I are still very close friends. And then they introduced me to Harry Benjamin, who they were working with. And Harry Benjamin said, "I am looking for a, an assistant, a receptionist. Somebody who will be completely open to a man walking in as a man one day and as a woman the next day that have no – Just a person – Zelda Suplee. She's a nudist. She's seen all colors, all shapes, all sizes, and probably all

genders." So Zelda became Harry Benjamin's assistant and as I told you, I knew Harry Benjamin until he died at the age of 102, and we came out with this article on, demographics of all of his patients and then as a sideline the dream study. Well, Virginia Glenn had me come to a humanistic psychology meeting, and I thought I knew about humanistic psychology, because one of my professors at Northwest University had given a lecture on Abraham Maslow and I joined the Association of Humanistic Psychology, met all the leaders in the field at time, and then found out that all of my other interests could very easily be subsumed from a humanistic psychology point of view. Also, I was very much attracted to the existential psychology wing of humanistic psychology because I had studied existentialism at Northwest University. And then years later when Maslow became the pioneer of transpersonal psychology, I followed that particular movement through. Just wrote an article for the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, by the way. And so what I do in psychology is mainly through the lens of humanistic transpersonal existential psychology. And all three are foundational to our new book on suicide, by the way. We're bringing a lot of things from the existential and even the transpersonal perspective. And, of course, I went on to become president of the Association of Humanistic Psychology and president of the American Psychological Association Division of Humanistic Psychology and so I've been very, very active for that, from that point of view, and this all reflected in the articles that I sent to Rice University because you will see many of them are from humanistic transpersonal existential psychology journals. I've also - more mainstream psychology journals. Of course, I should not say more mainstream because, the Humanistic Psychologist is officially an APA journal and it's been rewarding to me to see how the impact that Humanistic Psychology has had upon APA in general, on the field of psychology in general.

Christopher Senn: And that, I think, leads into a, another question that I would like to ask. sort of following up on, you know, you've talked a little bit about all of the, of your work on the frontiers of knowledge and the many professional accolades that you've received, and you've also had many critics along the way, as well, who have accused you of endorsing pseudoscience. And I just wanted you to maybe reflect on this a bit. And is there anything that you've seen, major changes over the decades? How are things different today, in 2021, as opposed to how they were in 1980 or 1990?

Dr. Krippner: Oh, that's a good question. Also, I'll have to fill in the gap. My interest in hypnosis goes back to my high school years. Remember, I was reading pop psychology articles about psychology and of course hypnosis was often mentioned. In the high school we had a little act, a new member of our circle of friends would come in and volunteer for hypnosis, and I would have them hold a plate and I would tell them, "You're going deeply into hypnosis, your eyes are getting dim, and you find it hard to follow directions. Take your fingers and rub them clockwise on the bottom of this plate. Aha – you might be going the wrong way. Be sure it's clockwise. Now go counterclockwise." And so what they were doing was to rub the soot on the bottom of the plate, which we held over a candle flame. "Now, touch it to your right cheek and bring it down. You had trouble figuring right and left didn't you? Now try your left cheek." And they were doing that; they had black marks down their cheek. Everybody was laughing and they were completely confused. And then, of course, they opened their eyes and looked in the mirror and realized what had been happening. Well, when they became interested in professional hypnosis, that was sort of the trigger. Of course, I did not want to do any type of hypnosis without credentials, but I became very active in hypnosis circles, both the two major

hypnosis societies of which I am a fellow, and again, I've written many, many articles on hypnosis over the years. So now to get back to your question, I have not had problems with many of the fields that I've written in – hypnosis being one of them, even though I was a early member of the team – and I remember when the American Psychiatric Association approved that hypnosis as a psychotherapy, and I spread the word loud and clear in terms of parapsychology, which is probably the area that arouses the most controversy. The other fields have become more or less acceptable fields of study, especially psychedelics. I'm delighted at how much psychotherapy is now pulling in psychedelics and using it very, very effectively. Well, over the years, I did get a lot of static and I actually was ridiculed by some of the more prominent people in the so-called skeptical movement – mainly Paul Kurtz who gave me the silver spoon award, silver spoon being a joke on, the spoon bending of Uri Geller, and this was an infamous award he gave out every year, and then also one of his colleagues, accused me of being in pseudoscience and had a very accusatory, article about me personally – both of them are no longer with us, unfortunately, or fortunately, as the case may be. However, on the other hand, the most, the best known critic of parapsychology was the magician, James Randy, the Amazing Randy. And I had met him in New York City and I had occasion to meet with him a couple of times because he was claiming that the volunteers for our dream research had seen the pictures in advance. And I had to point out to him, "No, this is impossible. Look at the test protocol." And we often would have people running the studies who weren't even a part of the team, as perfect counter *** fraud, and James Randy actually apologized in print to me. Well, the San Francisco newspaper wanted to do an article about me, a long article, and they interviewed two dozen people, and they were hoping to find something who would say something negative about me, so they phoned James Randy. And Randy said, much to my delight, "Well, this field is very controversial, and you never know who you can trust, but I can always depend upon Stan Krippner. He's completely unbiased. And I have no problem with my relationships with him." Well, of course, that blew everybody's mind. And the other person they interviewed was Ray Hyman, and he said the same thing. He said, "Well the experiments are well designed. The only problem is replication." And now, of course, with the interview, that has been disproven. So, the whole so-called skeptical field, I don't have any personal attacks anymore because all the attackers – and there were several of them – are now no longer with us. And the people in that field have really gone on to find better targets. I mean, I have no problem with skepticism. I'm actually a member of one of the skeptical groups. And you take a look at their magazines and journals – very rarely will you see anything about parapsychology anymore. With all of the fake news going around, there are many, many better targets for skepticism. So that's more or less – oh, I should also mention, American Psychological Association. No problem over the years. Every time I have submitted a paper to be presented at the convention about parapsychology, it's been accepted by one division or the other. Mainly the division of humanistic psychology, but sometimes other divisions, too. And I've got any number of awards from APA and then another organization, the Society for Psychological Science made up of hard core researchers, I'm also a fellow of that group, and they let me do a whole panel on parapsychology at one of their national conventions. So, in terms of mainstream psychology, I have no apparent detractors at least not that I know of. And that, of course, is a result of hard work by parapsychologists over the years designing studies that are more and more rigorous and so people who don't know much about the field, I say, just go and read some of the research. And then they change from being opponents to agnostic, which is fine with me. You can't be in touch with everything that comes up in psychology, and as soon as something controversial comes up, you can see both sides of the

question. The best idea is taken at an agnostic point of view. I'm agnostic about some other things myself, so I know that territory so well. Okay, hope that answers your question.

Learned Foote: Absolutely. Chris, I just wanted to ask – did you have something additional on PTSD in addition to what we described earlier? I know you had mentioned you had a question along those lines.

Christopher Senn: Yes, I would like - you already discussed, some of your, some of the origins of your research on PTSD and working with veterans. How do you see that research having developed over the years? You've recently done some more work in that field.

Dr. Krippner: I, as I told you being interested in PTSD is the result of remembering my cousin, and I was actually invited, I had made several trips to the Soviet Union and then to Russia after the Soviet Union dissolved, and I was invited to a Health Psychology conference and I decided to speak on PTSD. This was years ago. This was a novelty. And I was keeping up with the field, and so I gave my presentation and immediately I was invited to have a conference with the Russian psychologist who was in charge of rehabilitation for veterans. And he was at the conference and he wanted to know what I had to say. A colleague of mine who knows more about PTSD than I do, was also at the conference, so the two of us were interviewed together. And so, I tried to keep my contributions to PTSD clear of masking as a psychotherapist, because I'm not. I could talk about PTSD in terms of research, in terms of theories, in terms of evidence, even in terms of what to do for nightmares, in which I am somewhat of an expert and have written articles about PTSD and nightmares and the different ways of treating them. So does that cover the, the PTSD question? If not, ask it again. And get in close so I can read your lips.

Christopher Senn: Yes, it does cover some of it, but how do you, how have you seen this research change, the perspectives over the years change in this field?

Dr. Krippner: Oh, good heavens. PTSD has been with us for a long time. Battle shock during the second World War, battle fatigue during the first World War, soldiers heart during the Civil War, and I think that now it's gotten to the point where it can be identified fairly reliably. The American Psychiatric Association of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual has a number of criteria, and also we need to realize that PTSD is sort of socially constructed. It's something that a group of experts in the field have pieced together. In some other countries, if people suffer, suffer from trauma, but it's put together in other ways. And I think the social construction of PTSD is one way in which the research has changed because more and more people are realizing that trauma can have a very, very long history. A lot of people with complex PTSD had small traumas in their childhood, parental abuse, or in their adolescent being teased or bullied, and so they do have a history of small traumas, and they're more vulnerable to trauma when they become members of the Armed Services. You realize most of the people with PTSD never saw combat. They were in the military, but they never were in combat, and the people who were in combat don't have it worse than the people who were not in combat. So I think that the research has been successful in identifying some of the precursors to PTSD, and this has been a major, major sea change in terms of research. Also, the work with psychedelics and PTSD, a whole new area of research just opening up. Psychedelics are more effective than just about anything in treating PTSD for obvious reasons, even though it's not given more than once or twice. The material that

is gained in the psychedelic session is enough to get things rolling, get things started to stop nightmares among other things. This only reaches a small fraction of people with PTSD, unfortunately. It's very, very hard to get the approval to do clinical work with psychedelics or with ketamine, which is related to psychedelics. But I, again, as more and more data come in, I think we'll be seeing more and more psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. I say psychedelic-assisted because you don't just give people LSD and expect them to heal. It has to be within a therapeutic context. The relationship with the therapist, the lens of humanistic psychology, cognitive behavioral psychology, psychodynamic psychology, whatever, and from that framework, the therapist can help out the person with PTSD and I think this is exciting in terms of current research on PTSD.

Learned Foote: I would ask – we've talked about, you know, several different fields, that you've worked in over the years. I'm curious when you think about the future of studying the anomalous, where do you think it might go? And when you think about what methodologies for you have been most helpful? Are there some methodologies that have been less helpful? Some that have been, you see as bearing fruit in the future? Where do you see the trends of the most work to be done?

Dr. Krippner: Well, probably my most important publication was the co-editorship of the *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*. This was published by the American Psychological Association. And then a few years ago it was revised. They wanted a second edition because it was such a best seller. There you have it. Thank you. Wow. Wow, wow, there it is. Most important book that I worked at, yes. And then that led to the formation of a journal, the *Psychology of Consciousness*, and the three of us wrote an article on anomalous experiences for that journal, and I'm on the advisory board of that wonderful journal, and I think that one thing we've learned of all of this work is the variety of methods that can be used to study an anomalous experience and anomalous experience, because they are anomalies or diverge – something anomalous is either unexplained or affecting very few people or both. And in the book, synesthesia, hearing colors, smelling, sounds, et cetera, very few people have it, but there are adequate theories to explain it. But that still counts as an anomaly. You take something like precognition and telepathy or clairvoyance, a lot of people have those experiences, but there's no acceptable explanation. So that's also in the book as an anomaly. And I think that this opens up the importance of humanistic existential and transpersonal psychology and their research methods, especially in terms of phenomenological research in terms of open-ended questionnaires, in terms of participant observation research. Some of the research studies and methods that are now perfectly acceptable – for a long time they weren't – but face it, you cannot give, just by very, very simple stimulus response, methods in terms of research. You have to dig deeply to fully fathom the experience. There's some very good questionnaires, some very good, outlines for interviews, there are several phenomenological methods on board. And so I think that the study of anomalies has really opened up a more helpful and greater variety of methodologies for psychology as a whole.

Learned Foote: I wanted to follow up with one question. From a quote from this book, and thinking about, the use of the word "varieties", and you really emphasized that there are many different ways of approaching human experience, especially considering language, social conventions and so forth. And in thinking about your work with Native Americans and so forth,

and you've made a contrast between sort of a industrialized framework, in contrast to indigenous in terms of two different ways of seeing the world and in one context something might be transpersonal, which might not be seen the same way in another context. So I'm curious when you talk about comparing different cultures and looking at what gets called anomalous experience, how do you consider the, you know, the cultural impact, the different ways of seeing the world that could be at play there?

Dr. Krippner: Well, that's a good question. Of course, in many of these indigenous societies these experiences are not anomalous at all. They have a framework in which they can be viewed; they have explanations for them, which we might not accept in mainstream western psychology, which is perfectly acceptable in their own world view, and so again, it gets back to the fact that a lot of what we study, and a lot of these labels that we give to phenom are socially constructed. They're constructed for our society, but they might not work for other societies. Western psychology is pretty much based on seeing the individuals as opaque and that's why a lot of individual psychology and individual participants in the experiments, some of these indigenous societies see the individual as porous and so they have no problem with extrasensory perception – information coming into the organism from a variety of different places. And also it applies to healing. I did a book called *Psychologist in Paradise* with a co-author, and we focused on Bali, and the first psychiatrist in Bali and how he came from a background in western psychology, but he allowed his patients the option of having a shaman work with them, having family members live with them for periods of time, and all of these are hallmarks of the porous individual and the community context of the individual as opposed the more, shall we say, opaque or limited view that we have of individuals in western psychology. And, of course, when I visited the, I've seen so many shamans and watched so many shamans at work, and even with Rolling Thunder, he and I did psychotherapy with a Native American in front of a group of 50 people. That was his community. And in terms of the hypnosis that I did, I talked about how he could – he was, he was a drug addict, by the way, an alcoholic – and how his community could help him overcome the alcoholism, and I had him visualize all of the support he was getting from the community, and he was able to get the image of a bow and arrow. That is fine. Now you take the bow and arrow and you shoot the demon of alcohol that is harassing you, which he did. And then I kept going back, pulling in the community. Rolling Thunder had wanted me to hypnotize him. Not knowing that I would be doing this in front of 50 people, I agreed. But it worked out very well. he remained free of alcohol during his stay at Meta Tantai – Rolling Thunder's community. And for the next couple of years, he kept in touch. Never went back to alcohol. And again, pulled upon the community – in my work with him and Rolling Thunder's work with him – pulled upon the community for help. Pulled upon his mental imagery for help and his own inner direction for help.

Learned Foote: Thank you. That's, it's very, very interesting to hear.

Dr. Krippner: And also you have to realize that these indigenous society, very rarely use the word shaman to describe their practitioner. This is a western construct. This we pin on people who seem to be having the shamanic functions, which in my opinion are three. The shaman has to be designated by the community and as a part of the community. Second, the shaman has to obtain knowledge in ways the other members of the community cannot – through dreams, through drugs, through dancing, through drumming – those are the four Ds of shamanism, in my

opinion. And if you wanted a fifth D – deprivation. Sleep deprivation. Deprivation from sex, from food, et cetera. So all of these ways that shamans can access unordinary information and then the third criteria – they use the information not for personal gain, but to help and heal members of their community. So if a practitioner fits those three criteria, well, then we can pin the label of shaman on that person. Again, realizing it's basically a social construct.

Learned Foote: Thank you. That's, it's very, very interesting. I know that we are now running a little bit over the, the time we had set, so maybe we could start thinking about the closing. I just want to be conscious of, of people's time. So, it seems like, one of the things I'm thinking about is your papers that are now going to be residing at Rice and we're so grateful that these, these exist – and I'm wondering if you were to be giving advice to a younger person who might not have been growing up reading all the things as these debates were unfolding and as you were participating in them, someone looking back on this work, what would you want to say to people who are encountering this and, within the context of the archive, engaging your work? What is sort of, any guidance you might give to someone doing so?

Dr. Krippner: Well, another good question. I think that I would advise people interested in this field to be sure that they have a solid grounding in psychology. Or if they're coming from other fields, like anthropology or socio – have a solid grounding. Know the history of the field. Know the important events in the field. Know how knowledge has been gained by that field. Have that solid grounding and that's the framework in which you operate. Also, find some aspect of that field where you can become an expert and where you can earn a living even if there's no funding available for your work in studying anomalies. In my case, I always had the chance to fall back upon my work in learning disabilities. And sometimes when the money was not available for the dream research, I would give the seminars and workshops in learning disabilities. And also when I was in New York I helped to found a, a center for work in learning disabilities on Staten Island. Another one in Manhattan. The one in Manhattan called the Churchill School is now going strong. It's a 1 through 12 school. Almost everybody who graduates goes on to college. But we founded that close to 50 years ago as a means to get students who had learning disabilities into academia and into the mainstream. So anyway, what I'm saying is you get a good grounding in your discipline and that will, and then, of course, you can use that grounding as a framework for what you're going to do in studying anomalies. But if the opportunities are not available in anomaly, find something else that you can fall back on. You can get, maybe, licensed as a psychotherapist, or you can nowadays get a license as a counselor or even a coach, psychological coaching has become a worthwhile profession. And people can go to coaching without even a degree in psychology, but they have to have a background in coaching techniques. So the field of psychotherapy, counseling, and coaching is really wide open to people who want to make a living with those skills and if you have that in back of you, yes, then, you can in your spare time, go into studying anomalies. Either as a hobby or maybe if you get a grant, as a full-time job.

Christopher Senn: Thank you so much for that Dr. Krippner. And following up on that, as, as we said, you know, we're, we're so grateful for your gift to the archives, and this research is going to be there for, you know, decades, possibly centuries in the future. And just thinking about that, is there anything that you would like to say to researchers who are looking back at

your work in the future, say 50 or 100 years from now. Is there anything you would like to say to them?

Dr. Krippner: Well, you know, it's always very hard to predict. I think that, one thing that I would add is become aware of cutting edge technologies. I was interviewed for a podcast on dreams a while back and the interviewer, a very eminent dream researcher himself, made a suggestion I had not even thought of – in the field of dreaming, there is now a very sophisticated electroencephalograph – EEG device – that can actually pick up signals from the dreaming brain and identify what the person is dreaming about. Again, not specifically, but within broad parameters – if they're dreaming about a person or an outdoor scene – and he said, "Why don't you have somebody in the telepathy experiment try to send images to them, make the images very, very simple, and then if the EEG machinery picks that up, who can argue about it? Just transmit something basic, like a face or a tree or a geometric shape." Well, what a great idea. I had not even thought of this. So if you're aware of the cutting edge technology, you will be well prepared to take a jump into the future. I think that we are going to see – and again, remember that I'm a very pioneering advocate of neuropsychology, you keep abreast of this field, and you will see many, many ways in which it can be used usefully for whatever pursuit that you take. This also goes to virtual reality. It goes to artificial intelligence. Yes, these are new tools that psychologists can use. Be aware of how you might be able to use them, or you can advocate their use and this will open up dimensions of understanding not only humans, but communities. Of course, there's a wide field of non-human mammalian psychology, which is perfectly acceptable to study, and all of this can now be done better with the neuroscientific technology. And you say but isn't this materialistic? Well, first of all, it depends on how you define materialism. I have nothing against any approach to this discipline. There are now some of my colleagues who say, well, consciousness is primary. Consciousness is primary. This is the foundation of all type of reality. And they even wrote a book on the psychology of transcendence, which was published by the American Psychological Association. Well, be aware of the leading cutting edge developments in the field and if you can take advantage of them, please do. But you have to have a discipline before you go into something that's being cutting edge.

Learned Foot: Cool. That is wonderful. Thank you so much. Is there anything that we haven't covered that seems especially important to say as we come towards the conclusion of this, today's interview?

Dr. Krippner: Well, the one thing that I don't think I spent enough time on was the role of emotion, especially the role of love in all of this. Love is, as far as I'm concerned, is most important thing in our experience. Love for one's self, as advocated by another friend of mine, Albert Ellis – rational mode of behavior therapy founder. You love yourself, you accept yourself, and then you can love and accept other people. And then you can love and accept the world. You might not be happy with that, but you have to have love and acceptance before you go through changes. Also, with Maimonides and the dream laboratory, the relationship between the participant and the staff member who was sending the information was foundational. We had them be together for dinner beforehand. We sometimes let them choose who they wanted to work with in terms of the volunteers, and I think that the emotion in dreams, to me, is the key items in dreams. When I do dream workshops, I show them how they can start with the emotion

in the dream, trace that back to an early life experience, and then see if that early life experience is mirrored in their puzzling dream. And so, don't leave out the, what we call the affect of an experience, the emotion and the love, the joy, the awe of the experience because this can be foundational.

Learned Foote: That's wonderful. Thank you so much. Well, once again, we just wanted to say thank you so much for the incredible donation, for taking the time to talk to us today. And I know that there's other events that are surrounding the archives in the months to come, so I hope that this conversation can, continue in those formats.

Dr. Krippner: Well, thank you for having me and thank you again for setting up the archives. I'm delighted, of course.

Learned Foote: Absolutely. Wonderful.

Christopher Senn: Thank you so much for being with us today, Dr. Krippner.

Dr. Krippner: More than welcome.

Learned Foote: Cool. Thank you and I will send you a copy of the interview shortly.

Dr. Krippner: Thank you.

Learned Foote: Okay, thank you.

SpeakWrite
www.speakwrite.com
Job Number: 21057-002
Custom Filename: krippner-paranormal
Date: 02/26/2021
Billed Words: 11062