



A Course In Astral Travel

WEEK 8

Setting Routines and Overcoming Obstacles

By Mark Pritchard

This is the final topic of the course; it is worth looking at what you have achieved in this eight-week period, what you have achieved will be largely due to the efforts you made in it.

There is much more to learn and do, so this is not the end of the attempts that can be made on these courses to get into the astral, rather, it is just the beginning. The course laid the foundation for the exploration of the astral, but future courses will give information about the bigger picture of what is there. On these courses you will be able to practice and use what you have learnt on this one to explore and discover the nature both of yourself and of the scheme of things in life.

Then you will become better equipped as an investigator and searcher into reality.

When looking back it is very easy to see how things could have been done better, so have a look at the mistakes you made, times when you didn't try, did something else, didn't follow the program and so on.

Resolve to correct whatever mistakes you have found when you start the next course and keep looking for and correcting mistakes, because if you do this, you will be able to make real improvements and will be able to advance in your esoteric search.

We are going to look at setting routines and overcoming obstacles in this topic so that you can create an effective order in your astral exercises and create a foundation for the future.

Getting Into a Mode of Practicing

It's very easy to lose track of the exercises and to feel that the experience of Astral projection has slipped away from you. To make it work again you have to get back into the mode of practising, to re-evaluate what you have done and what you are doing and to draw up a new plan.

If you draw up a new plan try to stick to it because the results make it worth it. When one is caught up in the identification with daily activities, with the job, with friends, with family and so on, the esoteric work slips away and its importance is easily forgotten or pushed to one side. But that doesn't mean that it actually has lost its importance, it's just that the individual doesn't see it any more. It is far more important than you can imagine and when this life is over it was all that really mattered. Time that is wasted is never recovered again.

Planning the Exercises and Your Astral Strategy

Planning and organising your time and activities is very important, if you want the Astral to work you will have to make a special effort now the Astral course is over, so that you plan what you are going to do ahead and stick to it, if you don't keep to your program you will find that the Astral easily falls away, it takes a lot of effort to build up and not much to lose it. Additionally, the events that take place every day have a way of taking one's attention away from the esoteric work, so you need to be very disciplined in order to keep going and to achieve your goals in the Astral.

Make use of every event in life to learn from yourself and to carry out the esoteric work, learn to use each moment, build up the esoteric work that you do, so that it is the main centre of your focus, drive and interest. Live each day like this and your life will be radically transformed.

Work out in a diary (get one if you don't have one) a structure for your daily exercises. You can plan for the week ahead, work out the times that you are going to spend doing them and work out which ones you will do.

In this way, you become organised and you know what you're going to do and whether or not you have done it.

This of course doesn't stop you from taking any opportunity that you might have during the day to use to practice any of the exercises.

Dedication and discipline

It is possible to have astral experiences here and there when trying to project but for the astral to work with any regularity one must be completely dedicated to it and to be able to

project whenever you want to, requires a very strong effort throughout each day and this means being disciplined and orderly, staying focused upon the esoteric work, no matter what you are doing.

Discipline in relation to the physical body is also very important for astral projection since the body and the mind need to get used to a different way of approaching sleep.

It is up to each person to set up their own routine and to be as disciplined or not as they wish, but I am explaining from my experience how to get the best results and many others who have tried the exercises on this course have confirmed that what I am saying here in this topic applies. It takes a lot of effort and willpower, but it does pay off.

Overcoming Obstacles

There are many obstacles to overcome when learning about Astral projection and having almost any Astral experience. Most people don't work to overcome the obstacles, but those who do, find success. Every obstacle needs to be seen and overcome if that is possible.

This may involve sacrifices and big efforts, but rather than falling down its better to see what the obstacles are, to persist and to overcome them, then you get not only experience but strength and willpower that will help you in your life.

What sometimes seems like an insurmountable obstacle may be overcome with patience, effort and further esoteric work. You need to see the particular obstacles that you face in order to overcome them. I am going to mention some of the common problems that can be overcome if you are willing to put some work into it, since in life nothing is given for free everything costs and some of these costs are in effort, time, and determination. These are just a few examples; problems of all kinds arise in so many different ways again and again, it's important to keep track of your main goal and to work to overcome them, within whatever limitations you may or may not have.

Problems with Laziness

Laziness can be a very big obstacle in astral projection. It is a problem not only for astral projection but also for the spiritual work as a whole.

Laziness in itself is an ego (refer to the self-knowledge course for information on these), besides doing the general work upon the egos you also need to go against laziness by doing something even when you don't feel like doing it, if you don't do this you will always stay trapped within those feelings that laziness brings. If you do the activity that laziness is trying to stop you from doing, you will gain inner strength and willpower.

Sometimes it is difficult to spot, it can hide itself behind very nice excuses, which can sound convincing at times and which one likes to hear and go along with, but don't be deceived by them. It's just the way that laziness operates in order to trick someone.

Many people find that at the beginning of the course laziness is not there so much, because they are eager to try something new. The eagerness continues if they see things happening and working. However when things stop happening and the morale goes down and one begins to slow down, you begin to listen to those excuses more and more and laziness and entropy begins to settle, then it's easy to forget what you need to do and eventually you may even consider giving it up.

Not only the body but the mind is controlled by the ego of laziness. So you literally need to make yourself practice your exercises. For example, go to your room or sit down/lay down where you normally do your exercise and do it. If you have let the momentum slip and are out of practice, get back into it gradually so that you re-educate yourself. Start with an exercise for a very short period of time - up to 10 minutes, but no more. If you do it any longer when you are starting back the difficulties that you may face can mean that you may create an additional resistance to the exercises. So get back into it gradually but methodically.

By doing this you will bring back the mode and momentum of doing the exercises. Eventually you begin to see a light at the end of the tunnel and you gradually regain the work.

Being Disheartened

There is big difference between reading and talking about astral projection and actually doing it yourself. Sometimes expectations are different to reality and one discovers that it takes a lot more work to Astral project than one had thought, perhaps because it sounded so simple yet proved difficult to do.

It is very easy then to become disheartened, to think that you can't do it and then to consider giving up.

But it is important to realise that it is something that has to be learned, just like any new skill and that is why you need to "practice the exercises" because it is a process of learning, you are unlikely to astral project as soon as you have the techniques, even if you do, repeat success takes much work and maintaining it even more. But the exercises are given so that you learn with patience how to do them. Learning any new skill takes time and effort.

So you do need to put work into it, a consistent daily effort, which makes all the difference. More importantly, when you try your exercises don't expect too much at all, simply do them in order to practice your exercises again with the aim of really being good at it.

It's important to get into a routine and begin to build up just like it is done in sports. No one becomes good at sports overnight; neither would someone who has been away from training be good at it overnight. They need to go back into it, gradually training themselves again until they reach to the point where they left and to improve from there. If the consistency is there, then, you become good at it; because you learn how it works and you gradually know the way you behave psychologically and physically when you are trying the exercises.

Problems at home, at work or even a visit somewhere for a period of time, can sometimes throw your routine out of the window, so efforts need to be made to get back into the routine of practice again and again.

Problems with Pain When Doing Exercises

Feeling pain can be enough to stop the exercise of Astral projection. Pain can commonly arise when trying to project when one overdoes it, when one is recovering from an illness, or when one is not used to the exercises.

When the body feels pain it automatically withdraws from the cause of pain, so you will sometimes feel negative towards the exercises if you have pushed yourself or forced your body to go through pain when trying them.

Therefore you must not push the body to the point of pain. The body and the mind must be trained gently and gradually to do the exercises. The capacity of endurance of the physical body varies from person to person, after an illness, the body is even more sensitive to pain and discomfort, and therefore greater care should be taken. When the body has gone through an illness the body will not take long to get tired or feel pain. Therefore, the best thing is to try the exercises for very short periods of time, according to what the body can tolerate, before it becomes painful or uncomfortable.

After illness it would be best to start with very short relaxation exercises, then if you are able you increase the time each day until you feel ready to practise the Astral, but never force the body, see what you can take and don't push it, gradually build up.

If you are simply trying to go back into the exercises because you have drifted away from them and you feel pain when you do the exercises, the approach is similar. However, it will take less time to get back into the exercises since the body only has to be trained to remain still in a position for a while. At the same time the mind will need to go back to the discipline of focusing on the exercises.

The main thing in both cases is to get started in the exercises, gradually going further each time. If you persist, you will eventually wake in your dreams and/or experience astral projection. Once that happens, carry on with your daily exercises, maintaining and increasing them.

Like most things, these exercises improve with practice, so it's important to be continuous and consistent with them. This also implies patience and lots of it is needed, since we have to re-educate ourselves out of old patterns of behaviour into new ones, this takes time and effort to do. When the continuity in the exercises is lost, for whatever reason, it needs to be built back up again.

You also have to watch that you don't force yourself, increase the time spent practicing gradually, so that you get used to it and stop if you feel you are forcing something or if the body rebels and feels uncomfortable with it.

A Lack of the Ability to Concentrate

Although I have given the techniques to actually project as examples in this topic, concentrating upon what you are doing throughout the day is a vital part of the routine for Astral projection, and any routine that you have must include working towards concentrating and being aware of what you are doing throughout the day. If this is not done, the mind will never be properly trained or educated to be on what you are doing, and even the best techniques of projection are not very effective unless you do it.

When you do your exercise to project and the mind keeps thinking about other things it's due to a lack of practice of being concentrated during the day and of daily practices of the concentration/visualisation exercises.

The latter can be incorporated into your daily routine quite easily, but it takes a great deal of willpower to concentrate and be aware of what you are doing through a whole day. Most people don't even attempt it. But it can be done, it seemed impossible to me too once but I managed to do it after much effort. It helps a great deal to have the information about psychology from the Self-knowledge and Esoteric courses, because when we try to concentrate we deal with the different states of mind and these (what we call egos) are the obstacles to concentration and awareness. But put simply, if you put in all your willpower, and make the maximum effort to do it, you will achieve it and then you can really project.

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The Exercises on the Course

I am going to list the various techniques that we have used on this course so that you have a record of them all together in one place, but refer back to the original topic for information on it. There is one more new technique to Astral project with at the end of this list; it involves watching the dream images as you go to sleep.

Here is a list of the exercises on the course:

1. Awareness/concentration on activities
2. Relaxation
3. Remembering dreams
4. Daily concentration/visualisation exercise (10 minutes and more)
5. Waking up in dreams
6. The Conjurations and the Circle of Protection
7. Concentration on the heart
8. Mantras
9. Projecting to a room
10. Projecting to a place
11. Watching the dream images (in this topic)

Continue to read over and practise them after this course has finished and build on them so that they become useful tools for your search. Work out a daily and weekly program for yourself from the exercises given and stick to it. But maintain the awareness/concentration on activities, remembering dreams and the daily concentration exercise (10 minutes and more), jumping and pulling the finger and the conjurations and circle of protection every day; these are important to keep going with.

Final Exercise of the Course

Here is another different technique to astral project with:

Watching the Dream Images

Relax the body as normal lying on your back if you're comfortable like that, and then keep relaxing into the sleep. Watch for the first dream images and then get up slowly from bed, if you catch it at the right moment you will get up in the Astral.

You have to watch that you don't miss the opportunity and fall asleep instead; it takes a bit of practice. These dream images are different from thoughts, they appear to be almost real and you will know them when you experienced them, if you haven't done so already.

There is a variation on this exercise which is to go back into a dream. When you wake up, if you remember the dream you can go back into it, this is useful if you want to get more information on something. You just remember the dream and place yourself in it using your imagination; if you really place yourself in it and sleep arrives you will find yourself back in that dream.

Conclusion

This course has provided an outline of the Astral and provided exercises that lay a solid foundation for experience. There is much more to learn and subsequent courses will give

more information in depth. So that you have the tools and information for your own search into the hidden esoteric side of life and become a true investigator of the reality that exists, not only of what can be perceived with the five senses but beyond it.

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Question and Answer

Q. About a month ago I drew myself up a spreadsheet with all the practices I could do each day with the goal of doing 3 a day (even if they are just 10 minutes long). I arranged it so that each day I would tick off what I did, so the next day I could base my practices around that. This has worked amazingly well for increasing the amount of practices I do and preventing me getting lazy with it. My problem is that I'm concerned that this routine is becoming too mechanical and I'm losing the spontaneity and spark behind my practices. On the spreadsheet I put the questioning i.e. jumps/finger pulls as something that HAD to be done every day (40 times) and I have stuck to this. But now even this is becoming mechanical because I do it so frequently. How can I overcome this whilst still keeping routine and order to my practices?

A. Its better that you do the exercises than lose your routine, but look into why they have become mechanical, if you have become tired with some of the non-essential ones then change them, but look into and investigate the essential ones to make them work.

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