

FOCUS 10: MIND AWAKE/BODY ASLEEP

by

ASHES

Version 2.0

<http://www.explorations-in-consciousness.com/focus10.html>

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The concept of phasing

For those unfamiliar with the focus levels a little background is in order. The story goes back to Robert A. Monroe, who began to experience involuntary Out of Body Experiences (OBE) in 1957. These early experiences have been documented in his first book "Journeys out of the body" (Monroe, 1971). It was also during this time that Monroe discovered that sound patterns could induce certain states of consciousness, which eventually led to the creation of the Monroe Institute and patented sound technology called Hemi-Sync.

While the early experiences of Monroe were often characterized by a sensation of leaving the body his development took a different turn in later years. Monroe discovered the "quick-switch", which allowed him to move from one "location" to another in an instant by stretching or reaching out with his consciousness. Eventually, this led Monroe to consider the "second body" to be no more than "local traffic"--mere habit due to the physical experience (Atwater, 2001). Thus, the implicit philosophical background behind 'phasing' is that there is no such thing as "leaving the body", since consciousness is never really 'in the body' to begin with. Rather, all experiences which constitute things such as "trance", "hypnosis", "altered states", "meditation", "OBEs", and "astral projections" are simply variations on the same theme where consciousness is focused in different ways and in different degrees away from the physical.

The term phasing is a metaphor derived from physics, which conceptualizes consciousness as a waveform that can either be aligned or non-aligned with physical reality. For example, when we are 100% phased into the physical we are considered perfectly aligned with normal physical input and waking reality. In Monroe speak, this is called C-1 consciousness or primary phasing. As consciousness moves further away from the physical (and the senses) consciousness is said to

phase into other "focus levels". The first of these is focus 10 - the state of mind awake/body asleep.

Achieving the focus 10 state is facilitated by tapes or CD's, which utilize binaural beats to influence brain wave patterns in the person listening to them. These tapes are sold as part of a set of tapes/CDs called The Gateway Experience by the Monroe Institute. In particular, the set of tapes (Wave I) of the Gateway Experience is geared towards establishing the focus 10 state, while subsequent series (Wave II to VI) gradually increase the phase shift away from the physical. These focus levels have been described as follows (Monroe, 1994, p. 248):

Focus 10: Mind Awake/Body Asleep

Focus 12: A state of expanded awareness

Focus 15: State of no time

Focus 21: The edge of time/space where it is possible to contact other energy systems.

It is important to realize these focus levels are merely arbitrary numbers and signposts to identify the state of consciousness one is in. In case you're wondering, there is no focus 14 or focus 16. However, beyond focus 21, several other focus levels have been identified further removed from the physical, and which involve among other systems the perception of belief system territories ("astral planes"). Thus, The Gateway Experience is meant as a platform from which to explore further on your own. For more information, I suggest you visit the website at the Monroe Institute at www.monroeinstitute.org.

Purpose of the current paper

So what is the purpose of this paper? While exploring the focus 10 state I found there was surprisingly little information as to what this state entails. Do a search on the Internet and you won't get much further than "body asleep/mind awake" to describe this state. This is in itself not a bad thing, and the Monroe Institute is not in favor of sharply delineating the focus levels by stating in detail what is, and especially what is not possible in a particular focus state. Rather, the message of the Monroe Institute is that they would encourage you to trust your process as you progress through the focus levels.

However, I do think that some knowledge and ideas as to what focus 10 entails can be of help for some people if that information is presented such a way that it will facilitate the person to trust their experience rather than doubt it. Also, to have some idea of what to expect can help ease some fears, and in some cases, put an individual in the proper frame of mind as to how to approach the focus states. Lastly, there are those for whom the hemi-sync tapes have had no effect. This is not uncommon, and I hope that any lack of success with the tapes will at least in part be rectified somewhat with this paper. To illustrate these points, and part of the reason of why I was inspired to write this paper, the following quote from a person on the TMI-voyagers mailing list (From Leva, 1998, p. 165):

"I'm starting to feel like these tapes work for 99.99% of the population and I'm that 0.1% who stand outside watching the rollercoaster go by and seeing how much fun the people on it are having...so why am I posting? I guess it is to ask if there are any other people on the list who have had similar experiences/frustrations, and how do they solve them, or at least worked around them? Also what does Focus 10 FEEL like? It's described as "Mind Awake/Body Asleep', but what does this MEAN? Does the body feel numb, do you feel ANYTHING at all, is it something like when you sleep on your arm and can't move it afterwards due to lack of circulation, does it feel the way it feels when you are asleep, or what? Newbies, old-timers, your comments would be appreciated.".]-Fred Albrecht

The following sections will focus on the early manifestations of the going 'out of phase' condition (or focus 10) based on my own and others' experiences with this state. However, despite my best intentions, there can be little doubt that this report is biased. I don't see a way around it. Everyone's experience is unique, and although I have focused on common manifestations of focus 10, I will likely have overemphasized some phenomena while downplaying others due to my own interests and tendencies.

Given the above, I do think another little disclaimer is in order before continuing to read. That is, too much focus on knowledge - especially "second-hand" knowledge- can severely hamper one's efforts while practicing trance states or achieving specific focus states. It tends to activate the "left brain", and often questions will arise such as "Am I there yet?; What am I feeling now? What will happen next?" In general, this type of 'left brain' activity interferes with achieving a phase shift away from the physical.

So after reading this article go on your own merry way!

Getting there

Any attitude of "getting there" is a serious impediment to establishing an out of phase relationship (Gateway manual, 1980). This holds true both for reaching focus 10, as well as kick starting non-physical perceptions in this state.

This point is well illustrated by the following post on TMI-voyagers (From Leva, 1998; p. 168-169):

"...it took this experience to make me see something. That something was that when I was doing tapes and had things happen before it was when I was not "trying". I knew that then because when I had that shift occur I was definitely not trying to do anything. I was just doing a tape to be doing a tape. I had no expectations whatsoever at the time and "bang", I got something most pleasantly surprising. After that experience, I thought back and realized that all those other things also happened when I was not trying. I just took some time to connect not trying with results. Since that time I have never tried or had expectations, but that can trap you too. I found myself trying not to have expectations, and since I was trying, I was held at bay again. So it's sort of hit and miss." -Michael Smith

I think it's important to realize that the idea of "getting there" stems from our physical experience in space and time. However, for consciousness, there is no such thing as there and here. You may say: "That's all very nice and philosophical, but practically speaking, I am trying to get from one state to another, and therefore, I have to get there."

But how do you expect to "get there"? You certainly can't walk there. So if you follow that line of reasoning what exactly will you do to get there? This is exactly the problem with superimposing the limitations of space and time on consciousness - the idea that you have to do something.

Fact of the matter is, the less you do, the easier you will go "places". Of course, at some point or another you would want to set an intent. You don't necessarily want to be steerlessly floating on a universal sea of consciousness. But in general, after you have set your goal or intent, the less you do after it, the easier it will be "to get there".

So don't get too caught up in any "method" or "technique". Rather, if anything describes a successful progression through various altered states of consciousness, is that consciousness becomes increasing flexible and receptive to alternate forms of reality organization. I suppose this state of awareness, and indeed it is a state, is best described as mellow and gentle. This is not a mindless or selfless state, but a state of mind in which feel comfortable and relaxed without putting pressure on yourself to perform or fixate yourself.

So perhaps it's best to forget about techniques and first train yourself to be in a relaxed state of awareness, which is even more important than physical relaxation. This relaxed state of awareness is an awareness that is simply open to experience and doesn't continually asks itself whether it's "there" yet. You simply can't bully yourself into another state. Rather, cultivate a certain sense of mellowness towards the whole phasing approach.

Often, if you find yourself having difficulty this is because of not distinguishing between telling yourself to relax (which can go on ad infinitum) and being it. That is not some esoteric idea, but quite a practical and literal one. So just relax and you will find all things flow from there.

Preliminary considerations concerning focus 10

The whole benefit of phasing as opposed to the classic OBE lies in the concept of reduced sensory awareness, and being able to remain in such a state comfortably and without fear. So in order to benefit from such an approach, one has to start out with a baseline of sorts, and become fully comfortable with it.

So what is this baseline about? The baseline is being able to be in a state of reduced sensory perception, without any excessive goals and ambitions. It is about being able to stay in this level of awareness of focus 10 for a prolonged period, learning to recognize it, and becoming very comfortable with it until one is bored with it. It is important not to set too many goals, since if the goal is too ambitious, rather than simply holding the state for a long time, one will never get used to this state. The bar has been set too high. So put all ambitions aside and start to work on the simple goal of being comfortable in a state of sensory reduction.

It is not that hard to reach a light focus 10, or experience the preliminary markers of this state. What is much harder is to approach it without setting too many scary goals. Because, really, I can see no greater barrier to phasing or OBEing than fear. That's why it is so important to first dissolve that fear, and be for prolonged periods in this state of awareness of reduced sensory perception.

A quote from Monroe (1982, p. 29-30) regarding this approach is very informative: *Think of where you are now as a clearing in a dark forest- we call it C1 consciousness. We then take you into the forest to a point where you can still "see" the familiar clearing. That point is a guidepost (focus 10). After a sufficient number of runs between the guidepost and the clearing, the fear disappears. At the focus 10 guidepost, you always know you can go back to the clearing if you get uncomfortable for any reason. From the focus 10 guidepost, another point is established deeper into the forest and probably "out of sight" of the clearing. This we call focus 12. After several runs between guidepost 10 and 12, this too becomes familiar and secondary fears fade away. You know that if you can't perceive the clearing (C-1) from focus 12 you can see focus 10 - and from 10, you know the way back to C-1. The process is expanded to succeeding guideposts, each deeper and different, beyond ever expanding limits.* (Far Journeys, 1985)

So what is focus 10? As said before, it has been called body asleep/mind awake. However, this term is a serious misnomer. Monroe gives his most elaborate description (which isn't much) in Ultimate Journeys (p. 278):

Focus 10. A simplistic definition is mind awake and alert, body asleep. The mind is slightly out of phase with normal physical wakefulness. It is a stage where all five physical senses seem detuned or reduced in strength, and it is the beginning of objective perception of perception in (M) field energy.

Obviously, this idea of reduced sensory perception is far more accurate way to define focus 10 than the idea of the body being totally asleep. After all, how would you be able to hear Monroe's verbal messages when your body is truly asleep while using his tapes? So in fact, the early stages of focus 10 deals with a reduction in sensory input, which are not distributed equally over different sensory modalities. Now, this is not that hard to reach. It where the senses of touch (the cutaneous senses) seem muted, the perception of your body seems to be in haze, and you still feel your body to some extent, but not as much as usual. If focusing on it, you are still very much in focus 10. It's not like the experience has stopped. You do not have to go inward and "see images" to be in focus 10. The key is to notice this decrease in sensory reduction, and get fully comfortable with it.

Now and then, in terms of Monroe's metaphor, take your time to look to the clearing (your body), which may seem sort of far away, but it's still there. You can of course shift attention in focus 10, and start going more inward (at which time you are attentionally unaware of your body), but the key is the muted sensory perception if you do pay attention.

This muted sensory perception of the cutaneous senses has to be distinguished from numbness of the body due to bad circulation. While the sensations are similar, it is easy to tell the difference. While in focus 10, simply touch or move the fingers of your hand, and you will feel your sense of touch quickly returning. In contrast, if the numbness was due to bad circulation, it will take around 30-60 seconds of stimulating the nerves for your sense of touch to become fully operational.

Now, some people do not agree with this definition. They hold that to be really in focus 10 implies not feeling the body all together, while feeling suspended in a void with just blackness in front of one's eyes. I would agree with that position were it not that a muted sense of touch, as opposed to total absence of these senses, often appears to coincide with other characteristics of focus 10.

I suppose a way to sidestep the issue is to simply accept that phasing occurs on a continuum, and that even within a particular focus level, all things are a matter of degree. So rather than adopting a categorical definition of that you either are or are not in focus 10, let's just say that focus 10 can be experienced in varying degrees of depth.

With that issue out of the way let's look at some of the preliminary markers of focus 10 that often coincide with the earlier mentioned muted sense of touch.

On the threshold

The following markers are those, which you can expect to come across quite early on in your practice.

Perhaps, the least convoluted approach to knowing that you are in focus 10 is that your awareness feels different. There is a distinct difference with normal awareness that appears to revolve around an increased sense of coherence and balance. This state was well-described in the following account.

I find that in focus 10, I am not only relaxed physically, but am also emotionally calm. Kind of like when you've just woken from a really peaceful dream and you're still in that serene relaxed state of mind. So any disturbances I easily brush off or make use of (one time I had a fly buzzing around me like a jumbo jet and I made use of the sound and shifted my perception to flying around my room). I waver in and out of awareness quite a bit in focus 10, I figure this is caused by that annoying lifelong habit I have of going to sleep! I have also had the experience of feeling like I'm still awake and thinking that I haven't been successful, only to find that in fact I've been in F10 all along. -Spiral

Another account that appears to touch the deep sense of mental and physical relaxation is the following:

Focus 10 is one of the most profound states of physical tranquility that I have ever entered. It becomes remarkably easy to achieve. The sheer concept of training your body to be deeply

asleep while your mind is simultaneously awake and alert is a brilliant stroke which seems to have major healing implications as well as providing a launch pad or Gateway for more advanced spiritual work. The feeling is quite remarkable and quite attainable; a split level of consciousness, not unlike the left and right hands of an adept pianist or like a dreamer who can walk into the mundane, terrestrial world.

- Gateway excursion participant (From Leva, 1998, p. 139)

Another fairly consistent early marker of focus 10, although not always present, is a very crisp and bright awareness. This is not merely the sense of being awake as per the simplistic definition of focus 10 (body asleep/mind awake), but rather, one is more awake than in waking life. I think it is interesting how to note how this particular crispness often comes about. Quite often, there is sudden sense of "clicking in" or "plugging in" into this state, which provides quite a contrast with any dreamlike, dull, or even normal state of awareness preceding the shift into focus 10. The shift may be experienced either consciously or one suddenly "wakes up" from a dream-like or dull state. Sometimes the shift may be accompanied by images or sensations representing this sudden shift in awareness if you were in a dream-like state before entering focus 10. I am reminded of an incidence where I had spend the whole day watering the garden, which required me to often pull the hose to move from one area in the garden to another. As I was doing a focus 10 exercise that evening, and started to shift into focus 10 from a dull, dreamlike state of mind, this was accompanied by a sudden image where I find myself jerking hard on the water hose to move to a different area. At the same time, I felt my awareness aligning itself with the focus 10 state. Consciousness was crisp and clear from that point on.

I'd like to emphasize here, however, that this special characteristic of focus 10 where the mind is extremely crisp and clear, is not always present. Sometimes, the mind feels merely awake. However, there is still a sense of increased coherency and stability in one's awareness as compared to normal waking life. During those times, that crispness was lacking from the focus 10 equation I have found it far easier to open myself up to visual scenes, which seem to be more meaningful than the usual non-sensical thoughts and images as we drift into sleep. I suspect the lack of crispness may be related to physical or mental tiredness interfering with focus 10 state. So expect this particular characteristic to vary quite a bit, and do not try to hold onto it either. After all, you have to tip your toes into deeper regions now and then and that may mean losing some lucidity and alertness. However, do not tip-toe too deep into this area, since you will fall asleep, and all the transition to focus 10 and further are preferably to be experienced fully lucid and aware.

I suspect that most will be able to reach these early markers of focus 10 (including the mild sensory reduction in the cutaneous senses) in a fairly consistent manner with relative ease in the course of, let's say, anything ranging from one to twenty hours of practice. Hence, when you read reports on the focus 10 state, these preliminary markers are most frequently mentioned. However, you are only at the beginning of a full-fledged focus 10 state at this stage, and the subsequent stages tend to require a lot more practice.

In fact, I can't overemphasize the following enough:

Each time you think you can't possibly go deeper into the focus 10 state, and yet you continue your practice, you will be proven wrong over and over again.

The real deal: A deep focus 10

A deeper focus 10 represents a further phase shift away from the physical, which basically involves a more pronounced reduction in the cutaneous senses. You will know you are well on your way towards a deeper focus 10 when the position of your limbs is not entirely clear to you. For example, you may have the feeling that your arm is bent rather than straight along your body (if that is its actual position). I wouldn't immediately assume here that you are partially "out of body". Rather, I would consider it a side effect of the reduction in the cutaneous senses creating various illusions as to the exact position of your limbs. Suffice to say, that once these sensations occur you are close to a full-fledged focus 10. However, once again, it's a matter of keeping your awareness flexible and receptive for matters to progress further:

Fixating your awareness on a particular object (like your body) is not going to do much. Awareness needs the freedom to move to be able to go anywhere. Going inward is an excellent way to establishing that freedom. So don't keep your awareness continuously fixated in any one particular spot (whether the blackness in front of your eyes or your body), but start to move into the "expanse of your mind" in a free-floating type of way. If at any point 'bodily' vibrations or other energetic sensations occur which require your attention, you can always return to that "bodily point of view".

As the cutaneous senses retreat more and more, you may quite suddenly start to feel you that you only exist in your "head". If there were any problems with obsessive swallowing or being unable to no longer attend to your breathing then this should no longer pose a problem in this deeper focus 10. At this point, your body is truly asleep in terms of its sense of touch. The lessened sense of being in the body tends to bring along a feeling of "being in the head" and as such, sometimes the "head space" may feel somewhat enlarged. You can still focus on your spatial position and whatever remains of the sensation of your body, but do not stay fixated on it.

This awareness of almost solely existing "in the head" with little awareness of the body can quite suddenly come over you. If you are aware of moving into focus 10 fully and completely, these transitions into different stages of consciousness are often characterized by a narrowing or funneling of attention followed by a sense of consciousness stabilizing afterwards towards the blackness in front of your eyes. This is fairly mild in the case of moving into focus 10, but it is possible for example to move straight from the waking state to focus 12 while skipping everything in between in which case the sensations are more pronounced.

Once you reach a full-fledged focus 10, there should be the sense that your entire consciousness feels more far more channeled and focused than it before. You will likely appreciate the term 'out of phase' once you encounter this state.

Remember that the expansion of consciousness can also be experienced in many more indirect symbolic forms (rising and falling, expansion of body boundaries, etc.) So another characteristic of a deep focus 10 that may at times manifest revolves around the lessened influence of the cutaneous senses in one's perception of body boundaries. Then, naturally, a sense of non-alignment with the physical body may also occur as well as moving sensations such as rising, falling, shrinking and expanding. In addition, there may be lessened sense of being in the body as if one is slightly above it (or below).

Despite these deeper manifestations of focus 10, images do not always automatically occur in this state, or other types of sensations. The blackness in front of your eyes is not really different from that when you would close your eyes right now. This would indicate that although all the cutaneous senses have almost completely cut off, the visual senses are still fully activated. Hence, you will still have some overall sense of your spatial position, rather than floating all over the place.

It needs to be said that a deep focus 10 is truly quite a detached experience from the physical, and too often people assume having been there while they were not. In fact, most successful projectors often pass through it without holding still or recognizing this intermediary area. The feeling is almost like being in virgin, unspoiled territory even though thought processes may continue as usual.

It is not uncommon that you will find yourself unable to phase out further in focus 10, despite recognizing being in quite deep, and at the threshold of something else. If you got to this state being tired, yet being able to hold your balance in it alert and lucid, you may find some of your normal mental faculties missing. These will be more present with continued practice, and eventually you will start to sense being on the threshold of focus 12 - a more expanded state of awareness.

Now, these signposts of a deep focus 10 provide a good platform exploring in different directions, but in the focus 10 state as discussed so far the visual senses are still very much active (even though your eyes are closed), and this brings us to visual perception in focus 10.

Visual perceptions in focus 10

So far, I have focused on quite 'normal' sensations in focus 10. That is because, especially in the early stages, it is perfectly possible to be in focus 10 without experiencing any extraordinary visual sensations. Although it may not always be easy to have visual perceptions, it is certainly possible to have them, and much easier in focus 10 than from a C-1 state of mind. I would however suggest to start dealing more with visual imagery once you can hold a deep focus 10, since the risk of falling asleep is quite high otherwise (and the images are more like dream-vignettes rather than anything else). Also, you're likely to miss the focus 10 state (more or less located between the waking state and non-lucid mini-dreams) all-together by passing through it so quickly you won't even notice.

Within a deep focus 10 state a slight phase shift may be felt that is ever so subtle as you start to align yourself with visual perceptions. Have you ever been tossing and rolling in bed trying to get to sleep when suddenly all the mental chatter and edginess seems to come to a sudden hold and where it suddenly seems very easy to perceive visual images without losing alertness? That sense of ease of perceiving visual imagery is the subtle phase shift within a deep focus 10 that I'm talking about. You will likely encounter these images quite naturally when you relax your awareness a bit in a deep focus 10. Rather than staring into the blackness in front of your eyes fully aware, just relax your awareness in a fuzzy type of way almost like watching from out the corners of eyes figuratively speaking.

Once you are able to hold a deep focus 10 an active role towards the perception of these images by increasing your interaction with them is advisable. However, remember that this active role is a very fuzzy, soft and gentle movement of consciousness. Anything else will not necessarily throw you out of the focus 10 state, but all you will see is blackness in front of your eyes in a fixated type of way.

What would be your favorite perception? Some personal favorites of mine are looking at trees, large-scale nature scenes, lakes, seascapes, and beautiful mansions and houses. While in focus 10 (whether it is a light or deep focus 10) start playing around with seeing your favorite images in your mind's eye. Don't create the scene in terms of creative visualization. You don't "build" the image. Rather, you try to "see" a favorite image for only a very brief period of time as if it comes out of nowhere. Do not try to hold it. If it's vague (like for example seeing a half-formed image of a lake surrounded by mountains) then you do not try to make it more vivid. Get on with the next one. Sooner or later, if you stick to this process you will really perceive a version of your favorite image. One that really did come out of nowhere! Expect to be surprised with the detail and beauty of these images. They may be snapshots at first, but once you have seen, for example a tree, that originates not from your mind, but from elsewhere, this exercise will become tremendously fun and exciting.

In your practice there may be a yo-yo effect. You may shift into semi-lucidity where a vague image appears, and as soon as you start to notice, you'll shift back to where you started feeling fully lucid once again. However, at one point you will start to experience several things. First, it will become easier and easier for you to relax your awareness to the extent that you experience visual images. Secondly, you will find that you'll become increasingly lucid during the experience of these images. Not as lucid as you might like, but you will know you're getting somewhere when you start to experience some level of synchronicity between your intent, thoughts and emotions on the one hand, and the visual scenes on the other hand. That is the scenes will start to naturally follow your thought patterns, emotions, and concerns. Often, particular questions that are on your mind will find themselves answered in the visual scenes in front of you.

Increasingly, you'll be able to see the visual images for longer periods, while at the same maintaining a stronger sense of self while seeing them. You may also find yourself shifting in and out the visual imagery more easily and more quickly. Of course, these visual images occur only while relaxing your awareness and without doing anything in particular to "get" them. So if your

attentional focus in focus 10 is on the blackness in front of your eyes or on the remaining sensory sensations in your body, you are unlikely to experience anything. Instead, you need to forget about everything physical for a while.

What are you really doing here in this process? What you are doing is taking an active approach and real interest towards inner activity that is seemingly unrelated to yourself. In other words, you are creating a functional unit between your waking mind and non-physical energies. The images may not be very informative or useful at first. However, the functional unit between your waking self and inner activity is quite useful. This functional unit is your primary starting point.

Another way to conceptualize this issue is that you are trying to establish a synergy of sorts between action and perception. That is, a state of consciousness where you will find your intent to be immediately followed by their corresponding sensations and reactions. This type of phenomenon has been described as the following:

Any conflict between doing something and being there, or between active and passive states, is resolved in focus 10. Doing and being merge, triggering what we call "synchronicity," or a synergism between thought and action, between imagination and reality, between self and universe. In focus 10, the serious and playful aspects of self-discovery also merge, effort and fun are no longer in conflict. You enter a flow. Burdens become light. So seriously, have fun!" (Gateway manual, 1980).

For a while I was under the impression that synergy between thought and action was a highly exaggerated characteristic of focus 10. It seemed I was wrong however, since this synergy does become more and more apparent when you start to relax your awareness in focus 10 rather than keeping it in a fixated position. Granted, this type of synergy is generally (especially in the beginning of practice) not as dramatic in focus 10 as in other focus levels; in particular that of focus 21 where synergy between thought and action is major characteristic of that state. However, it is wise to make an early start with building and practicing this synergy in focus 10, which will serve you well in subsequent focus levels. That is, become used to the idea that stray thoughts may sometimes result in immediate perceptions in focus 10, and slowly learn to differentiate between thought and intent, so that you will not be swept all over the place once you reach higher focus levels. Focus 10 is a good, and comfortable place to start.

Where do these images come from? It depends. If you haven't set any particular intent, then the images of focus 10 are usually a reflection of ongoing concerns and thoughts. This is in itself a highly interesting phenomenon and much can be learned from it if you realize the connection between your thoughts and perceptions. If you are unaware of this connection, you will not only misinterpret a lot of your perceptions, but also feel without control.

Be creative. Focus 10 is excellent place to overcome fears as long as you realize you are in control!

If you ask specific questions expect the images to be far more meaningful and potentially very informative. The focus level are merely your reference point from which you do further exploring.

For example, after the images have occurred, what is the state you find yourself in? Usually, you will find yourself back in focus 10. So overall, you have perceived images by at least going from and back to focus 10, wherever these actual images may be "located".

One last aspect of engaging yourself in visual imagery deserves to be mentioned. Do not be surprised if you find yourself in focus 12 rather than the usual sensations of focus 10 after having gone deep into a visual experience. In fact, when starting to align yourself with non-physical visual imagery, it is not uncommon to experience some mild stroboscopic light effects or other sensations. These effects are not surprising, since in my opinion focus 12 is associated with the shutdown of the visual sensory modality (in addition the shutdown of those sensory modalities characteristic of focus 10. As such, these effects are yet another representation of a change in consciousness, which may occur when you go into prolonged periods of viewing visual imagery in focus 10. Alternatively, you may find yourself back in back in focus 10 staring into the 2D blackness in front of you, yet discovering the focus 10 state has deepened considerably.

So the practice of visual perception in focus 10 serves several purposes. Beyond the fact that there is a lot of guidance and answers to your questions in this state, it may lead you to move further away from the visual senses and tap into focus 12. However, keep in mind that this is usually a rather accidental way of entering focus 12. Eventually, you would want to enter focus 12 without tricks, and smoothly glide from a deep focus 10 (without the help of visual imagery) into 12 by mere intent.

Obviously, there are a lot of other perceptions besides the visual in focus 10 that are equally important.

Other perceptions in focus 10

Besides visual images, the gateway manual (1980) makes several broad distinctions between the different types of non-physical energies that may be encountered in focus 10. The most common of these are kinesthetic sensations. As I have mentioned before, I consider most of these sensations to be the result of the reduction in input from the cutaneous senses. I am ambivalent about the existence of an energy body being responsible for such sensations, and I do not think energy work is useful. The link between a loss of the sense of touch and "energy body sensations" is simply too obvious to ignore. For example, does it not make a lot of sense that in a deep focus 10 you will sometimes experience falling and rising sensations if the cutaneous senses are no longer there to firmly put you in one spot in space? Anyways, feel free to disagree. At least we can all agree on the sensations if not the interpretation.

The following is the description of kinesthetic sensations by the Monroe Institute:

"One method of perception is to feel differences kinesthetically (sensations that are, or seem to be, physical). Pay attention to your body and feel subtle sensations. These sensations might feel like motion: rising and falling, rocking, sliding and tipping. You might feel "electric" sensations: tingling or vibrations. Perhaps you might feel twitches, pulsing, pressure, or changes in temperature." (Gateway Manual, 1980)

I think that most people who have practiced OBEs are familiar with these sensations, or at least have heard about numerous times. However, it is worth here to mention that the more "complete" kinesthetic sensations tend to occur in a deeper focus 10, while in a lighter focus 10, these sensations tend to be more localized and of shorter duration. However, they are not always present in focus 10.

Kinesthetic sensations that are of particular interest are those that involve a complete dissolution of normal body boundaries. That is, the formation of a completely new body boundary that forms an egg-shaped form around the body. From my understanding, this is not the so-called "second body" but rather a field that seems to surround the physical body. It is a most peculiar feeling where one seems to be floating inside a big balloon and ones "edges" seems to be located around a feet away from the actual body. This "body" enlargement effect has been reported several times by people in the sleeping booth at the Monroe Institute (Atwater, 2001). In my opinion, this phenomenon is merely an indirect symbolized experience of the expansion of consciousness. Alternatively, like many other kinesthetic sensations the whole experience may in part be the result of a reduction in the cutaneous senses where body boundaries may shift into a different form. So I wouldn't worry too much if you never come across it, since it seems perfectly possible to reach higher focus levels without experiencing this phenomenon.

Another type of non-physical sensation are called "intuitive perceptions". The following:

'Gateway participants often report intuitive perceptions: a sudden awareness, a gestalt, a whole knowing, or "thought-ball" as one person delightfully described it' (Gateway manual, 1980).

Now, these intuitive perceptions are really interesting and they continue to be heavily ignored in most OBE literature, while they seem to operate there to a large extent. I personally have started to call them Inner Sense Percepts (ISPs) for lack of a better term. They are more common in focus 12 than in focus 10, but they definitely occur in either state. Often, in focus 10, they coincide with others types of perception such as visual imagery. An example of an ISP would be a situation where I suddenly became part of a dream-like visual scene with a lot of people around me, and I received the ISP: " You are never alone". It's a nice message to get (unless you're the paranoid type). For those interested in more information in this subject I advise to take note of the word "percept" in Monroe's books, and you will see how often these intuitive perceptions occur in the OBE state.

Lastly, there are the auditory perceptions. These sensations are more characteristic of focus 12 in my experience. Usually, I do not find the auditory senses to be reduced to the extent that auditory that "nonphysical" auditory perception is characteristic of focus 10. However, despite the general absence of a consistent reduction in the auditory senses in focus 10, do expect auditory sensations to occasionally occur in this state (usually as part of visual scenes), and become more prominent in focus 12. So to complete this section, here is the description in the gateway manual of auditory perceptions:

"An auditory perception may manifest as verbal messages, voices, or impressions of voices. It may also occur as sounds such as static, buzzing, pops and clicks, tones, or even music. These perception have a delicacy, a quality difficult to convey in physical, waking consciousness." (Gateway manual, 1980).

A peek around the corner: Beyond 10

Before concluding this paper I think a little information on focus 12 and the other focus levels is in order, because it is likely you will automatically stumble upon it while practicing focus 10. I think it should be clear that the major position of the current paper is that focus 10 involves a reduction in sensory input from cutaneous senses while most other senses are still largely operational. Hence, it should come as no surprise that once the visual senses start to shut down another phase shift can be expected even further removed from the physical. I would like to note however, that conceptualizing the emergence of focus 12 solely as the shutdown of the visual senses is likely a simplification. Perhaps more accurately, it should be conceptualized as a perceptual shift in context, where one's spatial position is no longer as strongly determined by a spatial-visual system that normally locates us firmly in the physical world.

Let me just leave you with the following focus 12 descriptions by others (Leva, 1998, pg. 331-332):

"My head got bigger, seemed like there was a split in half, a floating sensation; spacey; gray fog, infinity; high electricity; less stringent; Focus 10 more stringent; smooth; gentle; lot larger, no limit; head somewhat exploding, seeing symbols; vastness, felt connected deep in my bones; gray, felt larger in denseness; whirling vortexes movement; intimate like a red flannel shirt."

"Void; mountain like sensation, elevated, able to go off into the periphery of more than one direction at a time, flatten, floating; formless (body), energetic...; fullness (mind), emptiness (body), have times when doing both together, enlightenment, there are space, groups of predominant light; dense (solid mind), full, experiencing great amounts of knowingness or information (not specific information), experiencing a great presence (me); freedom of mind/space; light body; flat, no concrete sense, no body, I was just there and everywhere; absence of gravity, being able to move in space easily (doing acrobatics), able to perceive things from above."

Conclusion

This paper has made a broad distinction between a light and deep focus 10 state as well as a discussion of common perceptions in these states. It appeared to me the best approach to accommodate the wide variety of experiences people have in this state. Also, focus 10 has been identified as a state that is mostly characterized by a reduction in the cutaneous senses, which in turn can explain various sensations associated with the focus 10 state. I hope this paper has succeeded in its primary purpose in illuminating the main characteristics of focus 10, and

facilitate a person's ability to achieve this state. So this paper has come to end for now. However, don't expect this paper to stay unchanged. Hopefully with comments from others we can increase our knowledge base of focus 10 with a large varieties of experiences, and hopefully some general patterns, that can provide the road signs for others to follow.

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