

# **MENTAL FASCINATION**



**WILLIAM W. ATKINSON**

**THE MIND POWER SERIES VOL. 127**

# **Mental Fascination**

**William W. Atkinson**

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*Mental Fascination , W. W. Atkinson  
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck  
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9  
Germany*

*ISBN: 9783849626594*

*[www.jazzybee-verlag.de](http://www.jazzybee-verlag.de)  
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## **Mental Fascination**

### **Preface**

This book is “Side-Light Manual No. I,” accompanying my main work entitled “The Secret of Mental Magic,” and being in the nature of a sequel, supplement, or “side-light” thereto. The “Side-Light Manuals” of which this is the first, are designed to bring out the details, and special features of several of the “lessons” of which “The Secret of Mental

Magic” is composed; and to give something in the nature of Special Instruction regarding the actual operation or workings of the principles referred to in the lessons of my main work. The present manual bears the above mentioned relation to that lesson in my main work entitled “Personal Influence.”

In order to obviate the repetition of the information contained in my main work, I have been obliged to constantly refer to the latter. This would be inexcusable were the present book offered as a separate and independent work, for it might be justly considered as an effort to force my main work upon the attention of the reader, for the purpose of increasing its sale. But, inasmuch as the present book is advertised as a “Side-Light,” and its relation to my main work is plainly stated in every notice—and particularly as its sale will be almost exclusively among those who have already purchased and studied my main work—I think I may reasonably ask to be absolved from such suspicion.

I think that I have condensed much valuable information within the pages of this book, and I trust that my readers will like the work as well as do I. But, be that as it may, I defy anyone to read it without gaining a strong, practical realization of the powerful part, for good or ill, that Mental Fascination is playing in this Twentieth Century world of ours. And I feel that the majority will agree with me that it is time that this potent influence should be studied, understood, mastered and its “sting” extracted by such an universal knowledge of its principles as will serve to destroy its improper employment. To those who may consider this rather “dangerous knowledge” to be spread broadcast, I will say that Ignorance is no protection—I believe that in all cases the best way to dispel Darkness, and all that goes with it, is to Turn on the Light.

And this, then, is the Spirit in which this book has been written. May you so receive it.

William Walker Atkinson. Chicago, Ill, U. S. A., May 13, 1907.

## **Chapter I. What is “Mental Fascination?”**

“Fascination” means “the act of Fascinating, or state of being Fascinated.” The word “Fascinate” springs from the Latin word “Fascinare,” meaning “to enchant; bewitch, charm by eyes or tongue; captivate, attract,” etc. The definition of the English word, “Fascinate,” is as follows: “To act upon by some powerful or irresistible influence; to influence by an irresistible charm; to allure, or excite, irresistibly or powerfully; to charm, captivate, or attract, powerfully; to influence the imagination, reason or will of another, in an uncontrollable manner; to enchant, captivate or allure, powerfully or irresistibly.”

The above definition is condensed from a number of the best dictionaries, and gives the cream of the idea embodied in the word.

### ***My Definition.***

In this manual I shall use the term “Mental Fascination” in the sense of: The action of a Mental Force that powerfully influences the imagination, desire, or will of another. This is my own broad definition which includes all the varied phenomena of Personal Magnetism, Psychological Influence, Hypnotism, Mesmerism, Charming, etc., etc., all of which I hold to be but varying phases of phenomena of one Force. These things are all a “bit off the same piece,” in

spite of the claims to the contrary on the part of those who did not like the relationship.

### ***The Nature of the Force.***

What is the nature of the Force which produces that which we call Mental Fascination, which latter I have defined as “The action of a Mental Force that powerfully influences the imagination, desire or will of another?” Mental Fascination is the manifestation—what is the nature of the Mental Force that powerfully influences?

As you will see in some of the following chapters, there have been many theories advanced to account for this Force, the theories varying from “magnetic fluids” to mere simple suggestions on the part of the influencing person. Nearly every writer on the subject has had his own pet theory. But although these theories varied and differed greatly, the effects produced were about the same, which naturally leads us to look for some common basic principle operating under all the forms, regardless of the many theories advanced by those producing the effects. It is the old story here, as elsewhere.

A man finds that he is able to produce certain phenomena, by certain methods. He works along practical lines for a time, endeavoring to perfect his methods and increase the variety and effectiveness of the phenomena. When he has advanced along these lines, he begins to look around him for a theory to fit the facts of the case, and here is where he usually makes his mistake. He evolves some fantastic theory, which seems to him to account for the effects produced, and then he endeavors to fit the facts into the theory. If the facts will not so fit in, well, so much the worse for the facts—and he either discards the non-conforming facts, or else ignores or denies them. This has been the

course of theorists since the beginning. After a while, some man of a more scientific mind examines the recorded facts, and discovers the true underlying principle, and reconciles the differing theories of the original theorists by a new synthesis which combines the true principles in all the other theories, discarding the pet hobbies or prejudices of the previous authorities. And so it is in the case of Mental Fascination, as we shall see.

### ***The Underlying Theory.***

I shall not have much to say about theory in this book. I have explained the theory and principle underlying Mental Fascination, in my larger book entitled “The Secret of Mental Magic,” of which this little manual is a “Side Light.” In that book I have explained that the Underlying Force beneath all forms of Mental Magic—and Mental Fascination is one of those forms—is the Universal Mentative Energy, of which, and in which, each Individual Mind is a Center of Activity. I have also explained that the Mentative Energy of each Individual Mind is, and may be, transmitted from one person to another by means of Mentative Currents, or Waves. And that these Mentative Currents and Waves tend to “induce” in the minds of other persons, the emotions or feelings existing in the Mental States of the person sending out the waves or currents.

### ***The Mental Poles.***

I have also explained that there are two Mental Poles known as the Motive and Emotive Poles, respectively, which manifest Will-Power and Desire Force, respectively. Desire Force acts in the direction of drawing, pulling, attracting, luring, coaxing, charming, etc.; while Will Power acts in the direction of compelling, forcing, driving, impelling, commanding, demanding, etc. Desire always draws its

object toward itself; while Will always overpowers and compels its object, generally in the sense of driving it into action. In Mental Fascination both Desire Force, and Will Power are employed—generally in combination. Desire Force has been called the Feminine phase of Mentative Energy; and Will Power the Masculine. And in this as in everything else, the combination of the two qualities produces the most marked results. The student will be able to distinguish between the action of these two phases of the force, as he reads the pages of this book, in which instances of Mental Fascination are given.

This is all that I shall have to say about theory in this book, except where the various points are brought out in illustrating the examples given. I must refer my students to my “Secret of Mental Magic” for details of theory and principle. The present book deals with the “How?” rather than the “Why?”

## **Chapter II. Mental Fascination Among the Animals.**

Even before the human race was evolved, Mental Fascination was known instinctively to the lower forms of life. It is said that the cells in the blood of living things become aware of the presence of each other, at distances which must preclude any theory of ordinary sense “awareness.” Not only do they recognize or “sense” the presence of each other, but they seem to be attracted toward each other by some force, or fascination, which must operate along the lines of Desire and Will. Eminent scientists inform us that even the atoms manifest an attraction for each other, varying in degree according to the nature of the respective atoms. And the same authorities tell us that this attracting operates along the lines of a “desire” for each other, and a “will” which causes



them to fly to each other. Is it not reasonable to suppose that in this instinctive manifestation of Attraction, and the response to Attraction, among the Atoms there is to be found the elemental principle of Mental Fascination? And are not the phenomena of Electrical Attraction, and Magnetic Attraction, related to the human phenomena by a long series of links in a grand chain?

But, leaving the above questions without further consideration, we may find an abundance of proof among the higher forms of the “lower animals.” Among the animals we find many instances of the power of “charming” or “fascinating,” both of which I hold to be but varying forms of manifestation of Mental Fascination as I use the term, i. e., “The action of a Mental Force that powerfully influences the imagination, desire, or will of another.” This Mental Fascination, among the animals, manifests along two lines, viz., (1) along the lines of Desire operating in the direction of Sex manifestation, such as the winning of mates, etc.; and (2) along the lines of Will operation in the direction of overcoming the Prey of the animal, such as the “charming” of birds by serpents, or of smaller animals by tigers, etc. These cases are capable of liberal illustration and proof, and natural history affords us full authority for accepting the same.

### ***Instances of Animal Fascination.***

I recently read an account of a naturalist, who related that one day in a tropical country he noticed a winged insect circling around and around a scorpion. After a bit, the insect made a series of desperate plunges at the scorpion, as if in a frantic desire to terminate the charm; the scorpion soon striking down the insect, and afterwards devouring it. It is related by travelers that when one comes suddenly in the presence of a lion, tiger, or leopard, his legs

seem paralyzed, and the eyes of the beast seem to exert a peculiar fascination and power over him. I have seen a mouse manifest the same emotion in the presence of a cat; and the same is true of a rat in the presence of a ferret, or similar enemy. On the other hand, every observer has noticed the wonderful “charming” power that animals exert over others of their kind, of the opposite sex. If you have ever witnessed the courting of a bird, during the mating season, you will have a keen sense of the reality of the power employed. One of the birds, and it may be either a male or female, will be seen to actually “fascinate” or “charm” the one of the opposite sex, the latter lying still with quivering wings, and a helpless expression in its eyes. When compared with the attitude of the same bird, when charmed by a serpent, the resemblance will be striking.

### ***Scientific Testimony.***

I have before me a book written in 1847, which relates quite a number of instances of the operation of Mental Fascination among the lower animals. I will give you a few of them, condensed, and abbreviated. Prof. Silliman is quoted as stating that one day, while crossing the Hudson River, at Catskill, he passed along a narrow road with the river on one side, and a steep bank, covered by bushes, on the other side. His attention was attracted by the sight of a number of birds, of a variety of species, who were flying forward and backward across the road, turning and wheeling in strange gyrations, and with noisy chirpings, seemingly centering over a particular point of the road. Upon examination the Professor found an enormous blacksnake, partly coiled, and partly erect, showing an appearance of great animation, with his eyes flashing like a brilliant diamond, and his tongue darting in and out. The snake was the center of the motion of the birds. The Professor adds that although the snake disappeared in the

bushes, frightened at the approach of the men, still the birds seemed too dazed to escape, and perched on the near-by bushes, evidently awaiting the reappearance of their “charmer.”

### ***The Charming by Snakes.***

The same book relates an incident of a man in Pennsylvania, who saw a large blacksnake charming a bird. The bird described gradually decreasing circles around the snake, at the same time uttering piteous cries. It seemed almost ready to drop into the jaws of the snake, when the man drove off the latter, when the bird arose with a song of joy.

Another case is related of a ground-squirrel, which was observed running to-and-fro between a creek and a large tree a few yards distant. The squirrel’s fur was badly ruffled, and he exhibited fright and distress. Investigation disclosed the head and neck of a rattlesnake, protruding from the hole of the tree, and pointing directly at the squirrel. The poor squirrel at last gave up the fight, and yielding to the fascination, laid himself down with his head very close to the snake’s mouth. The snake then proceeded to swallow the squirrel, when his meal was interrupted with a cut of a carriage whip in the hands of the observer, and the squirrel, released from the spell, ran briskly away.

### ***Interesting Instances.***

Dr. Good is quoted as having made quite a study of the curious fascinating power that rattlesnakes manifest over small animals, such as birds, squirrels, young hares. etc. He relates that these animals seem incapable of drawing their eyes away from those of the snake, and, although seemingly struggling to get away, they still gradually

approach the snake, as though urged toward him, or attracted by a power superior to their natural instincts. He goes on to state that the animal creeps nearer and nearer, until at last it is drawn into the serpent's mouth, which has been open all the while to receive them. Dr. Barrow is quoted as relating many instances of this kind, known to peasants in all parts of the world. Valliant, the African traveler, tells of an instance in which he witnessed a shrike in the very act of being fascinated by a large snake at a distance, the fiery eyes and open mouth of which were gradually approaching the bird, the latter manifesting convulsive trembling and uttering piercing shrieks of distress. The traveler shot the snake, but upon picking up the bird, he found it dead—killed either by fear or the power of the serpent, or perhaps by the violent breaking of the spell. He measured the distance between the snake and the bird and found it to be three and one-half feet.

### ***Strange Stories.***

A case is related in one of the early reports of the Philosophical Society, in which a mouse was put in a cage with a viper, by way of an experiment. The mouse at first seemed greatly agitated, which state was followed by a condition of fascination, the mouse drawing nearer and nearer to the viper which remained motionless with distended jaws, and glistening eyes. The mouse, finally, actually entered the jaws of the viper, and was devoured.

Bruse, the African traveler, relates that the natives of an interior tribe seem to be protected by nature against the bite of scorpions and vipers. They are said to handle these creatures fearlessly, the latter seeming to be robbed of their power of resistance. He states that the creatures seem to sicken the moment they are touched by these natives, and are sometimes so exhausted by the invisible

fascinating power that they perish shortly. He says, "I have constantly observed that however lively the viper was before, upon being seized by any of these barbarians, he seemed as if taken with sickness and feebleness, and frequently would shut his eyes, and would never turn his mouth toward the arm that held him."

### ***"Snake Charmer."***

Personally, I have seen a somewhat similar case. When I was a boy, in Maryland, I knew of a farmhand who was called a "snake-charmer." How he did it, I never could find out, but he would exert some kind of influence over all kinds of snakes, poisonous ones included, and would cause them to remain fascinated until with a quick movement he would grab them by the neck with his bare hands. This man generally carried a few pet snakes around with him for company. They seemed perfectly contented, and would poke their heads up from out of his pocket, in order to look at some one else with whom he might be talking. The negroes on the farm had a mortal terror of this man, and would walk a couple of miles rather than pass by his house.

The power of charming animals, dogs and wild-beasts is undoubtedly possessed by some men, in varying degrees. And nearly everyone has known of men who could "charm" the wildest horses, as if by magic. I have read of some burglars who seemed able to quiet the most ferocious watch-dogs. The Swedish writer, Lindecrantz tells of certain natives of Lapland who are possessed of some process of charming dogs, to such an extent that they have been known to cow the most savage great-hound, causing him to fly from them with all the signs of abject fear. Many of my readers have seen, or heard of, the horse "whisperers" found in various parts of the country, who will shut themselves in a stable with a fierce horse, and by

“whispering” to him will manage to tame him completely, and make him passive to their will.

### ***Charmed by a Snake.***

There are cases recorded in which men who have been “charmed” by a snake, have afterwards given in their experience. One of these cases relates that the man was walking in his garden when he suddenly came into the presence of a snake whose eyes gleamed in a peculiar manner. He found himself fascinated, as if by a spell, and unable to withdraw his eyes from those of the creature. The snake, he stated afterward, seemed to begin to increase immensely in size, and assumed, in rapid succession, a mixture of brilliant colors. He grew dizzy and would have fallen in the direction of the snake, had not his wife approached, throwing her arms about him, and breaking the spell. Another similar case is related, in which a man found his companion standing still on the road, with his eyes fixed intently upon those of a large rattlesnake which was regarding him fixedly with gleaming eyes, scintillating in its raised head. The man was leaning toward the snake, and would have fallen toward it in a few moments. He was crying, feebly, but piteously, “He will bite me! He will kill me!” “Sure, he will,” replied his friend, “why don’t you run away? Why are you staying here?” But the man seemed perfectly dazed, and distracted, and could not answer. The companion finally picked up a stick and struck at the snake, which glided away savagely. The fascinated man was sick for several hours afterward.

### ***A Personal Experience.***

When I was a boy, I had a somewhat similar experience, although not nearly so serious. Walking one day among a grove of trees belonging to my grandfather, I found myself

standing staring intently at a snake about two feet long whose eyes glistened like large diamonds. In a moment I ceased to see anything but those awful eyes which glistened and displayed all the prismatic colors to my frightened glance. It lasted but a moment, however, for the snake glided away, seemingly as anxious to get away from me as I was to part company with him. I cannot say whether the spell would have been broken by me, if the snake had not moved away—perhaps it might, or perhaps not. All that I remember now, after the passage of thirty-five years or more, is that I did not seem to feel fear after the first shock, my feeling and emotion seemingly being that of great wonder, and amazement arising from what I saw in those eyes.

### ***An Elemental Force.***

But I have said enough regarding the manifestation of Mental Fascination among the lower animals. There are many interesting instances of this sort, scattered through the pages of books on animal life, and nearly everyone who has lived in the woods, or among wild life knows of many cases illustrating this fact which have come under his own observation. I have mentioned these features of the subject merely for the purpose of showing you that we have to deal with a general natural principle which manifests throughout all life. This book has to deal with the manifestation of this force among men. But in closing this chapter, I would ask you to notice the resemblance between the manifestation of the force among the animals, on the one hand, and among mankind on the other.

The animals employ the force for two purposes, i. e., the captivating of mates, and the capture of prey. And how do men and women use it? Along similar lines! Yes, I mean this, as startling as it may appear. For is not the use of

fascination, in the direction of attracting the other sex akin to the sex-charming noticed among the birds and animals? And is not the use of fascination in the direction of influencing men and women along the lines of business, or personal interest, akin to the

“charming” of prey by wild animals, serpents, etc.? You may see that evolution simply changes the form of use in this and other natural qualities, and power—the force or power remaining the same, under all of the changes. And, does it not become important for us to understand, study, and guard ourselves against the employment of such an elemental force as this, which manifests along all planes of life, from lowest to highest? I emphatically answer, Yes!

### **Chapter III. The Story of Mental Fascination.**

The story of Mental Fascination runs along with the history of the human race, for it has always been known to man in some form. Coming to primitive man along with other inheritances from still lower forms, it was used from the beginning. Its earliest forms were similar to its employment by the lower animals, such as has been mentioned in the

preceding chapter. The strong-willed of the race influenced and

dominated the weaker-willed ones. Without understanding its laws, the strong-willed barbarians discovered that they possessed a strange power of inducing mental states among

their weaker-willed companions, and were thus enabled to



work their will upon them. Many of the leaders of barbarian

races owe their positions of prominence and leadership to this

law of mental induction.

The Magic of the Priests.

But along with the rise of leaders there was manifested

a similar rise in power and influence of the priests. All races

have had their priests, and have today. A priest is a man whose

office is that of a mediator between men and their divinities —

one who claims to represent the supernatural entities in their

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dealings with men—a religious, or spiritual “middle-man,” as it were (I use this expression in all seriousness, and with no desire to sneer at the priestly offices, which have played an important part in the history of the race). The priests, not being occupied with warfare, or agriculture, and by

reason of their support being contributed by the people, found plenty of time to “think,” a somewhat rare privilege in the early days (and even in these times, for that matter). And, so, there gradually arose, among all peoples, a priestly caste that possessed the bulk of intelligence of the race. These priests soon began to recognize the importance of the Mental Forces, and they studied the underlying principles and laws of operation. This of course gave them an additional hold on the people, and a power over them. There seems to be no doubt but that even in the early days of the race, the priestly caste held a very wide knowledge of the laws and practice of Mental Fascination.

### ***Mystic Powers.***

In the heart of Africa today, we find the Voodoo men, or Conjurers, or Medicine Men, well versed in the application of Mental Fascination. It was also known among the early American Indians, although their degenerated descendants seem to have lost the knowledge, except in a few instances. The power of the priesthood among primitive races, is based almost entirely upon some form of Mental Fascination. And, as we see the race ascending in the scale, so do we see the priests displaying a broader and fuller knowledge of the subject in question. The history of the Oriental races show that a full knowledge of the operation of Mental Fascination has been possessed by them for thousands of years. In the pictured stories of the Egyptians, the traces of which appear in their ruined temples and other buildings, we see that they understood the art perfectly. In ancient Persia and Chaldea, the art arose to great heights. In fact, among all of the advanced ancient races of men, we find an important place given to the subject before us.

### ***The Ancient Mysteries.***