

# Hana Hou!

THE MAGAZINE OF HAWAIIAN AIRLINES



volume 18 number 1  
February / March 2015

## Riding the Plank

*The revival of  
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# Hana Hou!

THE MAGAZINE OF HAWAIIAN AIRLINES



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For hypnotherapist Stann Reiziss,  
limitation is merely a matter of perception

# FREEDOM





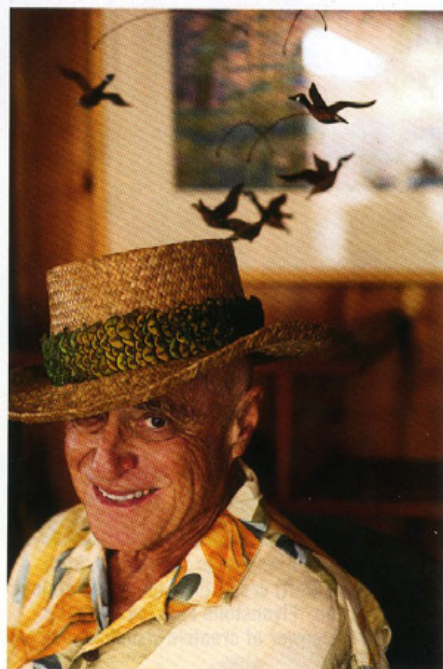
# OF MIND

STORY BY  
JOHN WYTHE WHITE  
PHOTOS BY  
OLIVIER KONING



**I**t was a common sight on O'ahu's North Shore: a tall, lanky young surfer with spiky blond hair launching himself from the waves, hurling his body and his surfboard into the air. Aerials are common in surfing, but this rider—Flynn Novak—was attempting something no one had ever done before: taking off on a wave, launching himself and his board up and over into a 360-degree aerial back flip, then landing perfectly back on the wave to continue the ride. Novak had been working on the maneuver unsuccessfully for eight years when a friend suggested that he should see Dr. Stann Reiziss, a local hypnotherapist who was renowned for his work with athletes.

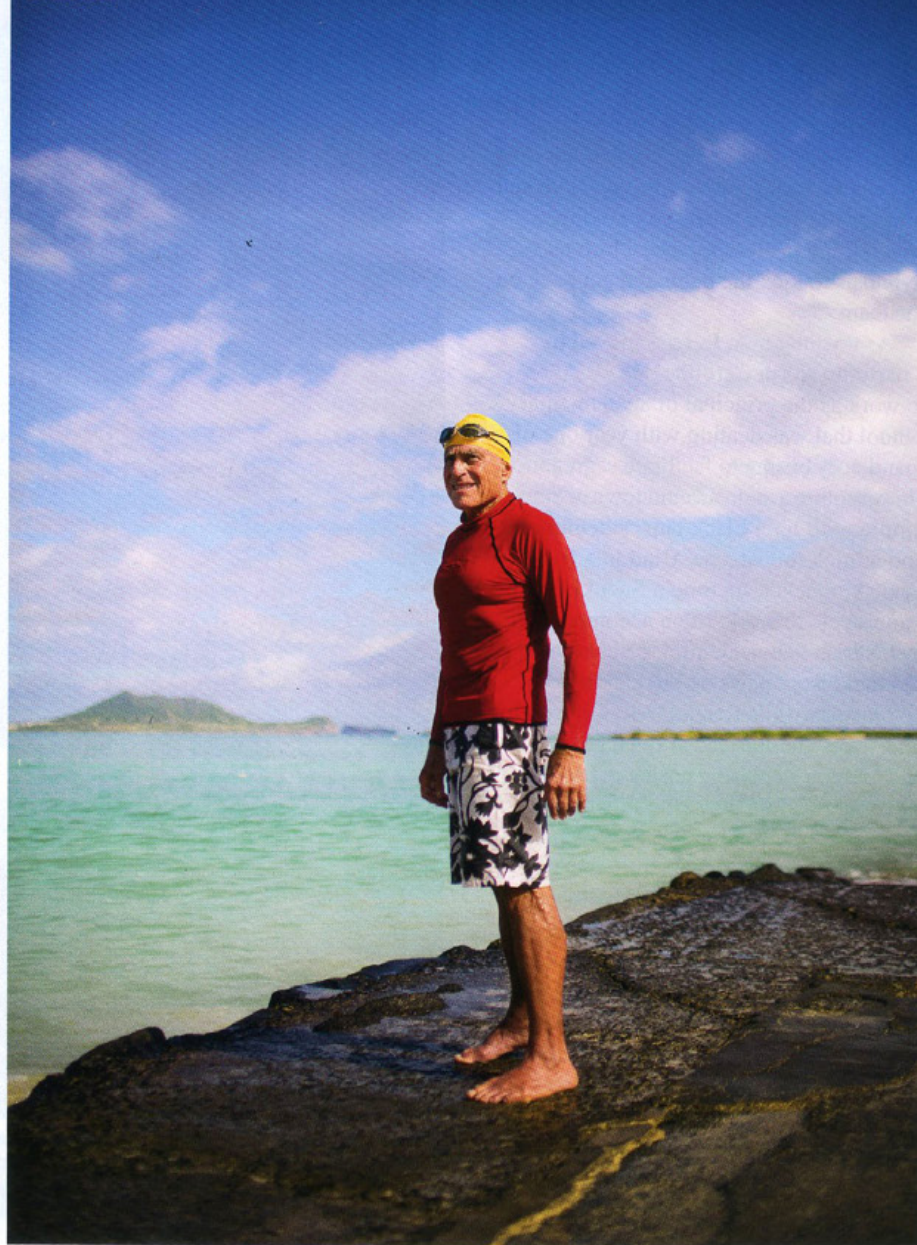
Novak took his friend's advice and went to see Reiziss. The doctor first helped Novak relax into a receptive state, then asked the surfer to picture himself successfully completing the maneuver. Next he taught Novak self-hypnosis exercises. When



Novak tried the flip again, he executed it precisely as he'd envisioned it. "It was déjà vu," he says. "The day I did it, I had first imagined exactly what it was going to look, feel and end up like. Thirty minutes later it actually happened. It was eerie because I felt like I was creating that reality instead of just having external conditions come together to make it happen."

Novak now accomplishes what's become known as the "Flynnstone Flip" on a regular basis. And he still uses the exercises Reiziss taught him, but not solely for surfing. "I don't like to refer to it as hypnosis," he says. "It's the power of creative visualization, how to imagine what

You are getting empowered, very empowered: Dr. Stann Reiziss has spent decades honing his skills as a hypnotherapist. "The point is learning to communicate directly with the subconscious mind," he says. "Hypnosis is power over yourself, not over others." Here he is preparing to embark on his daily swim to the reef in Kailua. "It's my meditation," says the man nicknamed Kai'au, or "swimmer of the sea."



you want and make it happen. Dr. Stann helped me realize that I have a lot more power than I give myself credit for, and that imagination is my biggest tool."

**Waialua resident** Lorenn Walker is an extremely fit 62-year-old: a compact, slender woman who's exchanged her body fat for muscle. For the past fourteen years, she has participated in the Maui XTERRA, an off-road triathlon that includes a nineteen-mile mountain bike ride. She went to see Reiziss to help her continue to meet the challenge of the race as she ages. "The method he taught me is 'review, preview and do,'" she says. "I review by watching

videos of top mountain bikers. I preview by imagining myself doing it. Then I do it. It's more robust than visualization because a facilitator leads you through the process, offering suggestions to your subconscious. But envisioning it isn't enough. You have to go *do* it."

That kind of self-empowerment is what Reiziss is looking for. "It's my intention to teach everybody self-hypnosis techniques in the first session," he says. "It's a magic show where the magician gives away all the tricks. I try to cut them free as soon as possible yet always be available."

Reiziss is 71 now, with a stocky build, short gray hair, a broad smile and a de-



meanor that exudes self-confidence and empathy. As a child growing up in a rough Bronx neighborhood, he would outrun bullies; later, after he learned to box thanks to Golden Gloves, he would confront them. He was fascinated by the idea of hypnosis, admired Houdini and wanted to hypnotize people into leaving him alone; it wasn't until later, he says, that he realized that "hypnosis is power over yourself, not over others." In college, when the coach kicked him off the swim team for smoking, a psychology professor helped him use hypnosis to kick the habit and get back on the team.

As a young man Reiziss moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. He was there to work as the principal of an elementary school that was dealing with year one of mandatory busing to facilitate segregation. He was quite a sight around town: a Yankee hippie with long black hair, sideburns and a thick moustache. Clad in a fringed buckskin jacket, he rode a Suzuki Enduro motorcycle to work, often accompanied by his Irish Setter, Gemini, perched on the gas tank, front paws on the handle bars.

One day while Reiziss was sitting on his bike (sans Gemini), a car ran a red light and hit him, shattering his leg in five places and dragging him down the street. Reiziss' bones were protruding through his pants, gathering dirt and gravel along the way. In addition to the compound fractures he suffered, he contracted osteomyelitis, a painful bone marrow infection.

He was scheduled to have the leg amputated when his surgeon had a fatal heart attack on the way to the hospital. Reiziss improvised a splint out of broomsticks and pillowcases, hobbled out of the hospital to a phone booth, called a friend to pick him up and went home to heal himself with the help of a physician sympathetic to his self-hypnosis methods. He saved the leg, although it healed crooked and shortened and continues to exert painful pressure on his knee. But he takes no painkillers, not even aspirin. Instead, he controls the pain with self-hypnosis. "Otherwise," he says, "it feels like background Muzak. *Heavy metal Muzak.*"

Several years after the accident, having earned his doctorate in educational psychology and established a practice in hypnotherapy, he had a wisdom tooth removed without anesthesia. The event was televised, and he used self-hypnosis to control bleeding and salivation as well as pain.

In Charlotte, Reiziss continued his education by completing dozens of graduate



Reiziss specializes in helping athletes reach a new level of performance, whatever their sport. Both Lorenn Walker (seen above on her bike and at right) and Flynn Novak (left) credit their improved athletic prowess to working with Reiziss. For Novak, it was accomplishing the "Flynnstone Flip" (seen on the opening spread); for Walker, it was acing the Maui XTERRA. "It's the power of creative visualization," says Novak.

courses at the University of North Carolina. He wrote a newspaper column offering advice on hypnotherapy. He served as a forensic hypnosis consultant to local police and the FBI. He worked with people who were seeking to make all kinds of changes: stop smoking, lose weight, study more effectively, overcome stress, anxiety and depression. He worked with people to strengthen their immune systems, including their "cultural immune systems"—Reiziss' term for societal conditioning received from such sources as parents and religion.

And, of course, he has worked with athletes: professional golfers, swimmers,

NASCAR racers, mountain climbers, surfers, tennis, basketball and football players. "The best athletes compete against themselves, not others," he says, "to exceed their own personal bests. The process is almost completely mental. Champion athletes will tell you that at least 90 percent of what they're doing is mental. Yet coaches spend 99 percent of the time dwelling on the physical." Golf, says Reiziss, is the ultimate mental game. "How long does it take to swing a golf club?" he asks. "Less than a second. If you play eighteen holes with a hundred strokes, the entire physical part of the game takes under two minutes.

Courtesy Denton A. Johnson II



# Rings



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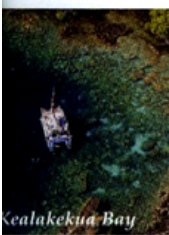
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## Freedom of Mind

But you're out there for four hours. So imagining outcomes, focusing—that's the biggest part of the game."

He maintains that all hypnosis is self-hypnosis and that the state attained is known by many names: altered consciousness, logical mind distraction, concentrated or focused attention. In the case of an actor playing a role, it involves consciously losing yourself and becoming the character you're playing. Although his technique varies with each individual, Reiziss employs common approaches. "I ask people what they want. Surprisingly, that's not easy for most people. They know what they don't want. So I ask them, 'What are you here for? What would be the perfect outcome after your final session?' I tell them to be clear, concise and positive. I get a sense of where we're going, come up with a consistent autosuggestion or affirmation, and feed it back to them. And I teach them how to make up their own suggestions, to modify them in any way they please. The point is to learn how to communicate directly with the subconscious mind."

The process also involves accessing personal energy and using it to fulfill what you commit to do. "There's self-discipline involved, no question," Reiziss says. "Self-discipline leads to self-control, which leads to self-confidence, which leads to self-actualization. That's the progression."

**Rainos Hayes is a coach** who trains young surfers for elite-level competition. He went to Reiziss, he says, because he felt "scattered and discombobulated." Reiziss eased Hayes into a relaxed, receptive state, then helped him to stop repeating negative thoughts. "By constantly ruminating about my problems, I was reinforcing them," Hayes says. "He gave me suggestions that allowed me to work towards goals versus getting tripped up rehashing things." Hayes now does the exercises he learned from Reiziss three or four times a week.

Jeff Bushman shapes custom surfboards in Sunset Beach. When he went to Reiziss the doctor told him, "You don't have a center or a balance. You're letting other people steal your energy."

"In the first session he taught me a technique I still use," Bushman says. "It's simple. I work at home, so any time I have a negative thought or feeling, or an unpleasant experience with a customer, I go into my room for five minutes, sit down, inhale and exhale slowly, relax and find my center. I count down from fifteen to one, and then I repeat a couple of phrases. It

cleans my energy." After his first hypnosis session, Reiziss asked Bushman how long he thought he had been under. "No longer than five minutes," the shaper replied. In reality, forty-seven minutes had passed. "When I left his office," Bushman says, "the sun was vibrant and radiating through every cell in my body. I felt like, 'Wow! I'm alive again!'"

Ian Anderson, a dark-haired native of Cape Town, South Africa, owns 38 Print in the Waiialua Sugar Mill, where he designs and produces laminates and decals for surfboard manufacturers. He came to Hawai'i in the late 1980s after serving in the South African army doing combat duty in Angola when he was only 17. In the Islands he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, night terrors, sleepwalking and claustrophobia. The day he tried to fly back to South Africa, he couldn't board the plane. The next day he tried again, with the same result. He called a local hypnosis information service and was referred to Reiziss.

"After the first session," Anderson says, "my night terrors stopped cold. After the third session I went to the airport, got on a plane and took the thirty-two-hour trip to South Africa." Anderson developed affirmations that he continues to use. "Stann realigned me into positive thought," he says. "I was receptive to everything. My mind was like a sponge. My business is stressful, but he let me know that I'm in control. He said, 'Your life is a movie. You wrote the script, you're directing it and you can hire and fire as you see fit.'" The South African is profoundly grateful. "Without Stann," he says, "I probably wouldn't be alive today."

"What the mind can conceive and be made to believe, a person can achieve," says Reiziss. "When you align your imagination with your willpower, you're in the flow. I call it 'white light moments.' You go to a place where you're not thinking about what you're thinking about. You're relaxed, centered and empowered. You notice everything but you're distracted by nothing."

Reiziss continues to consult with clients. He and his wife have lived full time in the Islands since 2002, and every day he walks four miles round-trip to the ocean to swim for an hour and a half, regardless of the weather; locals have nicknamed him Kai'au, "swimmer of the sea." On his seventieth birthday, to deal with his fear of heights, he went skydiving. He says he never gets sick and can't remember the last time he had a cold. When is he planning to retire? He laughs. "To be retired you have to be tired," he says, "and I'm not." **HH**

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