

Hypnotist shucks his shackles in climb to the top

The Globe and Mail May 17, 2004 Page A7

People & Places

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There's more than one way to snag a high-rise office with big windows, a skyline view and comfortable chairs by the age of 32.

One is to bust your hump through business school, land a job and work your way to the top, stepping on or stabbing your lesser colleagues' backs, if that's what it takes.

Or there's Collin Rosati's route: Study music, switch to economics, drop out, play sax on a cruise ship, get married, get bored and become a certified master hypnotist.

Reaching one's destiny, after all, is about removing the blocks and letting life flow. It's what Mr. Rosati tells his clients, and it seems to work for him, too.

"The things I do don't change, just the environment that I do them in," he says, sitting in the shade on Cumberland Street in Yorkville. "Once you accept who you are, everything becomes easier."

Self-acceptance is a cornerstone of Mr. Rosati's brand of hypnotherapy, which he's practised in Toronto for more than two years now.

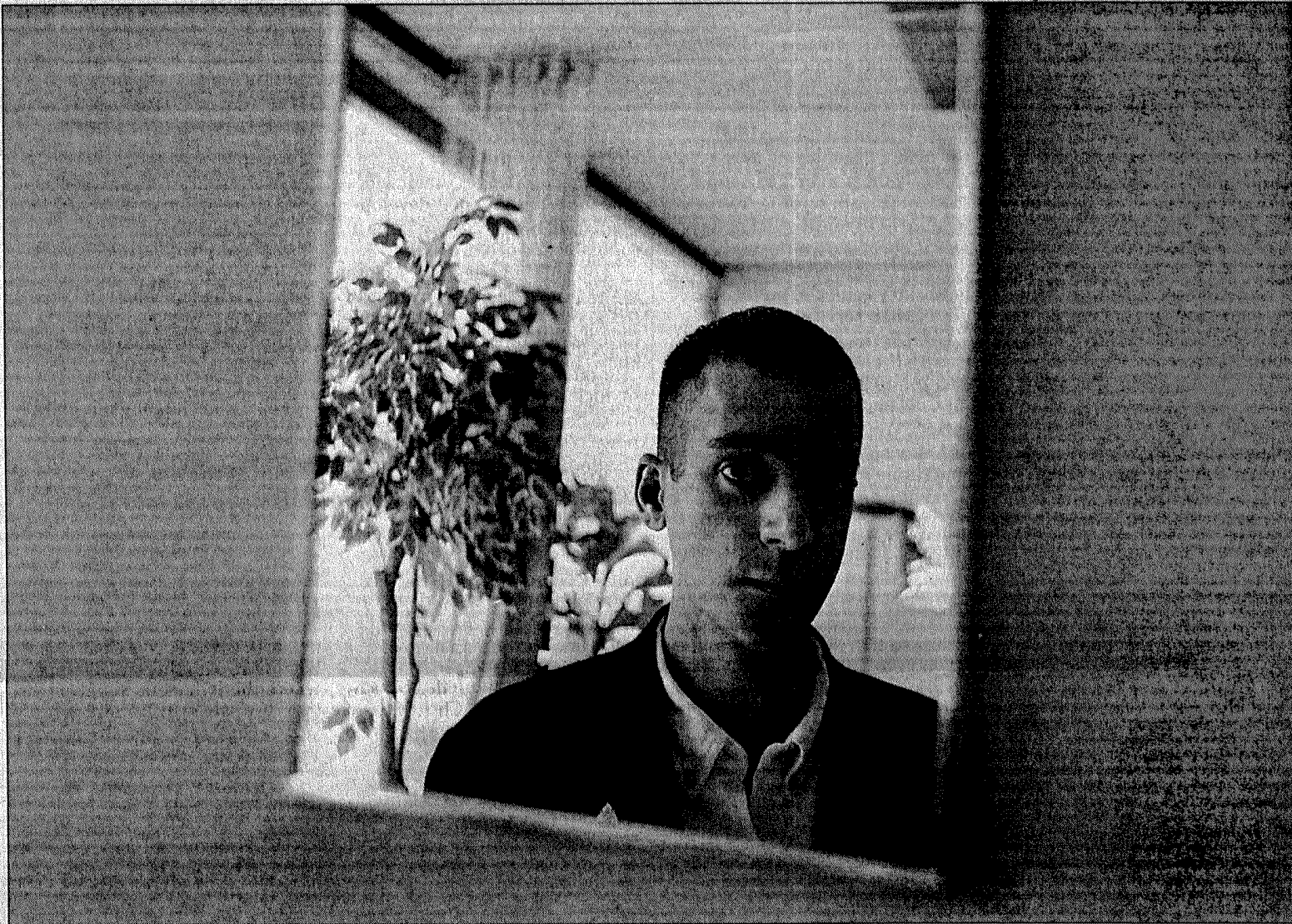
He works in a quiet, spacious room at the Pacific Wellness Institute, an alternative-treatment clinic on the 11th floor of a tower near Bay and Bloor Streets.

Hundreds have sought his help to quit smoking, lose weight, face their fears, find love — their reasons are many, but his aim is always the same: to help the conscious mind make peace with the subconscious, where self-defeating behaviours lurk.

"My real job is to have people be comfortable with their decisions," says Mr. Rosati, a clean-cut, youthful man who is serious about his work but not himself.

Describing his successes, he tempers professional pride with an amusing sense of "Who, me?" wonder.

Having mastered the quit-smoking and weight-loss treatments, he turned last winter to his "nemesis" — emotional fulfilment — in response to a growing num-



DONALD WEBER/THE GLOBE & MAIL

Collin Rosati is shaping his destiny from his office in the Pacific Wellness Institute on the 11th floor of a tower near Bay and Bloor Streets.

ber of unhappy women lining up at his door.

Mr. Rosati produced scripts to use during treatments and a CD for clients to take home, and boldly encouraged his half dozen test cases to "wish upon a star."

His claimed results: A tall, love-lorn woman, who wished to meet an even taller, athletic man who ran his own company, found him two days later. Another secured a job offer, another returned to her husband out West, another quit her job to chase her writing dream.

"Talk about a stroke of ego," Mr. Rosati says, eyes wide and smiling. "I've got these beautiful, rich women sleeping in my room, and I'm talking to them."

Of course, they're not really sleeping, as Mr. Rosati is quick to make clear.

Clinical hypnosis, as this skeptical columnist can attest, is just a relaxed state of intense focus on

the subconscious, like being lost in a good novel. In my case, it's more like a bad novel, about a roller-coaster relationship that recently spit me out, bruised and confused, onto an island of self-doubt.

Sitting in an underground food court during an afternoon lull, Mr. Rosati tells me to relax and fix my gaze on a spot on the wall.

"You might be surprised to notice that the images on the outside are a little blurry, surprised to find yourself feeling perhaps a little hazy in the mind," he says, and he's right.

I allow my eyes to close as he guides my focus to relaxing further in my chair. Gradually, my neck goes limp and my chin drops to my chest. I'm aware, and a little embarrassed, that I'm doing this in public.

He asks me to imagine a place where I could let go and fly, if not for the chains holding me back —

chains I might have needed once, but, in most cases, not any more.

"The chains are weak," I tell him, though I can't tell which ones might still be useful. That's for me to decide, he says, adding that I'm free to return to this place and examine those chains whenever necessary.

My conscious mind, reduced to a vague hum, is nonetheless aware of how hokey all this will sound later. Mr. Rosati knows it, too, having earlier confessed a distaste for sounding "new agey." Yet, as he guides me out of my trance and I open my eyes, a tear rolls down my cheek, and I feel better, clearer, calmer.

Mr. Rosati also feels good, but tired — just like he did after gigs when he worked as a jazz musician around the city.

Hypnosis, like jazz, is about balance between chaos and order, and when he thinks about it, so is economics, which he studied for

two years to please his parents, before the cruise ship beckoned.

"You can sit there looking at charts all day," he says, pointing to an office building, "or you can hang out with dancers and drink 50-cent beer."

The cruise gig lasted only a week, but it showed Mr. Rosati a life he didn't want, which aligned nicely with his all-experiences-are-instructional philosophy.

Hypnotism has been just as enlightening — "It totally rubs off on you; that's the good part and the scary part" — but true to form, Mr. Rosati doesn't intend to stay too long.

He'll present his latest CDs and a weight-loss book at the Learning Annex in June and July, sales of which he hopes will propel him into his next life.

"I plan to retire when I'm 35," he says.

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