



the script

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President's Letter Autumn 2014



Dear members,

Our apologies for the late newsletter. Summer is always a bit slow to get things done. Membership cards will be mailed out shortly as well. We have a new Logo. Please let us know what you think of it. Our main focus is still to increase membership so we have brought in more volunteers to help Lisa with the Social networking committee. We need to do as much as possible to get our message out and attract new members. As always we are open to suggestion. We eventually would like to build a new web site so if we can start to increase membership that will be on the agenda. The minutes of our AGM in June will be available on the IACH web site shortly.

I hope everyone had a great summer and let's keep moving forward.

President, IACH

Vice President's Message - Angela Bain



Another year has gone by and our association is continuing to grow. With growth comes change and reflection. At the same time, it is comforting to reflect on the stability and professionalism that has always been a hallmark of our association. As we continue to attract new members, I know it will be our on-going mission to stand out as a professional body for hypnotherapy that promotes high standards and best practices. As we grow, it is my hope we will create ever increasing value of member-

ship and stand out as the hypnotherapy association of choice!

*Angela Bain
Vice President*

Editor's Note - Diane Auld

Happy Autumn

My favourite season of the year. We have an article on Empathy and video review "Wizard of the Desert" and a history of a man I have a great deal of respect for Milton Erickson. This will be my last newsletter as Editor. I have edited the newsletter since 2005, time to pass it along. I will stay on as



consultant and will continue to write for the newsletter. It has been fun, challenging and rewarding. I want to thank Sheldon and all the contributors for helping me. Lisa Brown will be taking over as the Head Editor. No that was not an intentional joke. But

Lisa is brilliant as a hypnotherapist and will make a wonderful editor. She will still need articles and anything you might like to contribute to the newsletter

Thank you so much for the adventure and the honour.

..... and so she walked out into the fresh air Wondering Just wandering Wondering how she could help people become passionate about being a hypnotherapist A story teller ... all those things she loved Change was possible.... She was making a change Opening to the new Finding her way Creating new possibility Endings and beginnings

Please contact Lisa at : newsletter@hypnotherapyassociation.org

Documentary Review

Lisa Brown

“Wizard of the Desert”

The Living Legacy of a Wounded Healer

Review of “Wizard of the Desert” and A couple years ago I started seeing rumors of a possible documentary on Milton Erickson MD. My training and foundation of practice as a counseling hypnotherapist was based on the work of Milton Erickson and his student Stephen Gilligan. I was very excited about the possibility of a movie about him and his work. The stories surrounding him, the words of his students are legendary in the hypnosis practitioner community.

The title “Wizard of the Desert” couldn’t have been more perfect. His insight into people, his ability to communicate, his uncanny perception seemed like the stuff of magic. Of legend. A man of science who transcended science and magic to become something more. An ingenious healer and teacher. A hypnotic artist who paints with others in trance upon the canvas of the mind.

I wanted, I needed to know more about him. Who was this human being who made such huge differences in people’s lives and continues to effect entire fields of study and lives more than 30 years after his death?

The story of Milton Erickson’s life begins in Aurum, Nevada in 1901. His mother and father traveled west in a covered wagon and built a home utilizing part of a canyon hillside as a wall of the cabin. His early years are illustrated by both present day footage as his adult children explore the remnants of the cabin he grew up in and with very

early family photographs of his childhood.

I am struck by how his early experiences shaped him and his ideas to the work he would eventually do later in life. The courage and resilience, all the resources he called upon to deal with situations and things that challenged him. The things he later developed, concepts of changework, observations, the ideas he developed in psychotherapy and in hypnotherapy-he lived them. He gave himself some pretty steep challenges as well. He just knew what he needed, sometimes in spite of what others-even experts, were saying. His courage is very inspiring to me. It certainly makes sense in light of how he lived and practiced. I find a great deal of it resonates with me.

The documentary is interspersed with and told through the stories of family, students, and colleagues. From this viewer’s point of view-it feels very much like I am sitting down having a chat with each person-in their living-room or office, walking next to them. The admiration and love those who knew him have for him is palpable in this movie.

One of the things that strongly resonated with me personally was his early struggle with paralysis. Dr. Milton Erickson’s experience in healing and recovery from loss of mobility was one of the primary things that gave me hope and strength last year when I was in the hospital confined to a wheelchair. After suffering a major stroke feeling that my life was basically over with my future plans obliterated my thoughts turned to Dr. Erickson and the story of how he discovered how to make use of muscle memory and self-hypnosis. I was being told that maybe eventually in a few years I might be able to walk again with a cane. It brought to mind the story of how he had overheard his doctor telling his mother that he would not live to see the sun rise again. That made him so angry that a doctor would say such a

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“Wizard of the Desert” The Living Legacy of a Wounded Healer

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thing to a mother whose child was ill that he vowed to prove that expert wrong. And he did. Not only that but through trance and watching his younger siblings learn to walk he relearned to walk.

Erickson’s stories of his recovery helped me in my own journey towards recovery. In 3 months I was out of my wheelchair-not years “maybe” but MONTHS “definitely”! The thought that Milton Erickson would crawl for hours across the fields of his family’s farm inspired and drove me forward. When I was alone I would think about how babies learn to walk. I’d get down on the ground or the floor and crawl. Trusting that ,like Erickson, my mind and body would work out the connections, the pathway, to eventually walk again. And I did. It isn’t graceful or unaided entirely but heck-neither are the first few years for toddlers either.

“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl,

but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

~Martin Luther King Jr.

This documentary is valuable not only to Counseling Hypnotherapists but beyond us to people who are struggling with issues and dilemmas on their own individual journey in life.

A great man and the greatest hypnotherapist to ever live is helping this human being still-34 years after his death. Dr. Milton Erickson still heals. Through this video, through his students, through his stories-his legacy lives on. His legacy is immortal in all of us.

“Only the wounded healer can truly heal.”

~Irvin D. Yalom, Lying on the Couch

The doctor is effective only when he himself is affected. Only the wounded physician heals.

Carl Jung



An Introspection on Empathy

By Diane Auld

HT.,RTC., MTC.,RCS.



“Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and, therefore, the foundation of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared.”

- J.K. Rowling

Empathy – the gift we give our clients. The “fall back” to basics when I feel like I have to do something or even worse I don’t know what to do. Let’s talk about empathy. I am going to share with you what I think, feel and have experienced with empathy; I would love to hear what you have to say. Of course I will need to wait to find out what you have to say so I will invited some other friends in to the discussion.

“When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.”

— Ernest Hemingway

As a counselling Hypnotherapist my experience is most of the people who come into my office come from childhoods where they were not listened to and there is a deep need for them to be listened to. To find the one person who will listen and hear them.

People who have told their story to friends, family and professionals and have not felt heard will be very sensitive and know when they are not being heard. Listening is a skill and for me needs to be practiced. What a gift we give our clients in those moments when we can listen completely.

“Self-absorption in all its forms kills empathy, let alone compassion. When we focus on ourselves, our world contracts as our problems and preoccupations loom large. But when we focus on others, our world expands. Our own problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection - or compassionate action.”

— Daniel Goleman, Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships

Counselling and hypnotherapy are about helping our clients internal view expand to allow for solutions and clarity to emerge. Empathy allows for the deep sense of being listened to by another to offer the client the space to listen to themselves on many different levels.

“If we can share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame can't survive.”

— Brené Brown, Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead

If I can listen to you with empathy and non-judgement maybe, just maybe you will realize how human and normal you really are. Wouldn’t that be a lovely place to start a healing journey.

“The great gift of human beings is that we have the power of empathy, we can all sense a mysterious connection to each other.”

— Meryl Streep

Mysterious connection. Have you ever worked with a client and that connection is experienced as a deep and guiding connecting with their unconscious mind? When I can

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Stories and Metaphors

by Diane Auld

Tea with my Future Self and the Process of Change

A little fun and quantum mechanics. What if we had access to Our self in the future who has already made the change we are seeking to make?

Comforting to know there is a part of me who already knows how to do this.

As the woman walked she called to her future self. You already know how to do this. I know you do. I need your help That would do it she knew. Meet me at our place the voice came back.... Yes..... she knew the place.... Our place They had met there before on many occasions ... her future self The self who really did know how to How to make the changes needed to make the changes ... yes ... she really did know how to do this did she nottime to breathe she heard herself say ... time to Breathe And so she did ... allowed her body to be guided by a deep inner knowing ... guided to where she knew..... this really was familiar ... this landscape she journeyed through Journeyed towards colours and textures feeding her senses Allowing her to breath even more deeply Each breath bringing her closer closer Closer to their place Within the place of inspiration place where it all happensquestions and answersquestions and answers And she did have questions two old friends meeting in a familiar place Very handy having you to call upon ... the woman smiled at her future self They both sat down and looked over the questions to find the answers one step at a time She knew the process of change one step at a

time and this was the first stepyes her future self said And I know those steps This creative step leads to this we take stock and see what needs to happen next trust what needs to happen next Timing ... I noticed on this journey timing it important Very important Ideas are flowing even now they are flowing.... Coming together..... coalescing wonderful thing having an unconscious mind which remembers all Accesses all the skills and abilities needed in this momentneeded for all the moments Nice to know Isn't it nice to know Help comes from many different places ... within.... Within our world I found myself listening differently Looking for insights inside and out in the world we really are guided..... the woman loved the tone and possibility of this moment It really was possible Change really was possible Actually the woman pondered Has already happened Thank you...© Diane Auld 2014



An Introspection on Empathy

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trust myself it is as though their unconscious is giving me the words to say or not say. Both of us walking a path together in deep listening. Magical and mysterious.

“It is not learning we need at all. Individuals

*Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?*

*Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's
share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow
filled?*

*Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant
fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!
William Blake*

need learning but the culture needs something else, the pulse of light on the sea, the warm urge of huddling together to keep out the cold. We need empathy, we need the eyes that still can weep.”

— Lydia Millet, Oh Pure and Radiant Heart

As a counselling hypnotherapist it is my ability to hold the space for my client that allows her to go inward, to trust and explore. Can I listen with my heart as much as I listen with my ears. Stories and metaphors are created with beauty in the moments where I have truly heard my client. Can my heart allow me to touch the place in me where I can find the words to allow my client to weep if that is what is needed? Can my tears speak to her tears and offer a safe space.

“seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another, and feeling with the heart of another.”

— Alfred Adler

Can I imagine what it would be like? How I would feel about myself if I was the client; if this was offered to me. Maybe just maybe I could listen to myself. Maybe I would not need so deeply to be listened to because I was being listened to. How would that change things for me? Can I imagine?

The way of being with another person which is termed empathic...means temporarily living in their life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments.....to be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter the other's world without prejudice...a complex, demanding, strong yet subtle and gentle way of being.”

Carl Rogers

Ah Carl, you are my teacher. I return to your wisdom and look for your presence when I forget how. When I feel pushed from within in and from outside influences to do something, to fix it. You are the master as you sit in deep listening and I am the student.

*Where love rules, there is no will to power; and where power predominates, there love is lacking.
The one is the shadow of the other*

Carl Jung

This Carl teaches me about the shadow aspects of counselling. I really do not know what is best for this amazing person sitting in my office. Which is why Indirect helps me to honour the wisdom within my client that really does know. Does know what to do with a story told for my clients benefit. Tell me what you desire, what you have tried, what stands in the way and through language and compassion help me to weave a landscape for your unconscious to find the best way to

The End

the script

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International Association of Counseling Hypnotherapists Mission Statement

Our commitment is to create an international organization of professional hypnotherapists and those interested in this healing modality, to continue to increase public awareness, acceptance and support in the therapeutic and ethical use of hypnotherapy through education and promotion.

"Sometimes – in fact more times than is realized – therapy can be firmly established on a sound basis only by the utilization of silly, absurd, irrational and contradictory statements." Milton Erickson

Interesting Characters From the History of Hypnosis



Milton Hyland Erickson

Milton Hyland Erickson (December 5 1901 - March 25 1980) was an American Psychiatrist specializing in medical hypnosis and family therapy. He was founding president of the American Society for Clinical Hypnosis and a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association and the American Psychopathological Association. He is also noted for his approach to the unconscious mind as a creative and solution-generating. He is also noted for influencing brief therapy strategic family therapy, family systems therapy, solution focused brief therapy, and neuro-linguistic programming.

Erickson frequently drew upon his own experiences to provide examples of the power of the unconscious mind. He was largely **self-taught**. A great many of his anecdotal and autobiographical teaching stories were collected by Sidney Rosen in the book *My Voice Will Go With You*. Erickson identified many of his earliest personal experiences as hypnotic or autohypnotic.

Erickson grew up in **Lowell, Wisconsin**, in a modest farming family and intended to become a farmer like his father. He was a late developer and was both dyslexic and color blind. He overcame

his **dyslexia** and had many other inspirations via a series of spontaneous autohypnotic "flashes of light" or "creative moments", as described in the paper *Autohypnotic Experiences of Milton H. Erickson*.^[2]

At age 17, he contracted **polio** and was so severely paralysed that the doctors believed he would die. In the critical night when he was at his worst, he had another formative "autohypnotic experience".

E: As I lay in bed that night, I overheard the three doctors tell my parents in the other room that their boy would be dead in the morning. I felt intense anger that anyone should tell a mother her boy would be dead by morning. My mother then came in with as serene a face as can be. I asked her to arrange the dresser, push it up against the side of the bed at an angle. She did not understand why, she thought I was delirious. My speech was difficult. But at that angle by virtue of the mirror on the dresser I could see through the doorway, through the west window of the other room. I was damned if I would die without seeing one more sunset. If I had any skill in drawing, I could still sketch that sunset.

R: Your anger and wanting to see another sunset was a way you kept yourself alive through that critical day in spite of the doctors' predictions. But why do you call that an autohypnotic experience?

E: I saw that vast sunset covering the whole sky. But I know there was also a tree there outside the window, but I blocked it out.

R: You blocked it out? It was that selective perception that enables you to say you were in an altered state?

E: Yes, I did not do it

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Interesting Characters From The History of Hypnosis

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consciously. I saw all the sunset, but I didn't see the fence and large boulder that were there. I blocked out everything except the sunset. After I saw the sunset, I lost consciousness for three days. When I finally awakened, I asked my father why they had taken out that fence, tree, and boulder. I did not realize I had blotted them out when I fixed my attention so intensely on the sunset. Then, as I recovered and became aware of my lack of abilities, I wondered how I was going to earn a living. I had already published a paper in a national agricultural journal. "Why Young Folks Leave the Farm." I no longer had the strength to be a farmer, but maybe I could make it as a doctor.^[3]

Recovering, still almost entirely lame in bed, and unable to speak, he became strongly aware of the significance of non-verbal communication - body language, tone of voice and the way that these non-verbal expressions often directly contradicted the verbal ones.

I had polio, and I was totally paralyzed, and the inflammation was so great that I had a sensory paralysis too. I could move my eyes and my hearing was undisturbed. I got very lonesome lying in bed, unable to move anything except my eyeballs. I was quarantined on the farm with seven sisters, one brother, two parents, and a practical nurse. And how could I entertain myself? I started watching people and my environment. I soon learned that my sisters could say "no" when they meant "yes." And they could say "yes" and mean "no" at the same time. They could offer another sister an apple and hold it back. And I began studying nonverbal language and body language. I had a baby

sister who had begun to learn to creep. I would have to learn to stand up and walk. And you can imagine the intensity with which I watched as my baby sister grew from creeping to learning how to stand up.^[4]

He began to recall "body memories" of the muscular activity of his own body. By concentrating on these memories, he slowly began to regain control of parts of his body to the point where he was eventually able to talk and use his arms. Still unable to walk, he decided to train his body further by embarking - alone - on a thousand mile canoe trip with only a few dollars. After this grueling trip, he was able to walk with a cane. This experience may have contributed to Erickson's technique of using "ordeals" in a therapeutic context (see below).

Erickson was an avid medical student, and he was so curious about, and engaged with, psychiatry that he obtained a psychology degree while he was still studying medicine.

Much later, in his fifties, he developed [post-polio syndrome](#), characterized by pain and muscle weakness caused by the chronic over-use of partially paralyzed muscles. The condition left him even more severely paralyzed, but, having been through the experience once before, he now had a strategy for recovering some use of his muscles which he employed again. After this second recovery, he was obliged to use a wheelchair and suffered chronic pain which he controlled with self-hypnosis:

It usually takes me an hour after I awaken to get all the pain out. It used to be easier when I was younger. I have more muscle and joint difficulties now... Recently the only way I could get control over the pain was by sitting in bed, pulling a chair close, and pressing my larynx against the back of the chair. That was very uncomfortable: But it was discomfort I was deliberately creating.

In the early 1950s, anthropologist/cyberneticist [Gregory Bateson](#) involved Erickson as a [Continued on page 11](#)

Interesting Characters From The History of Hypnosis

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consultant as part of his extensive research on communication. The two had met earlier, after Bateson and Margaret Mead had called upon him to analyse the films Mead had made of trance states in Bali. Through Bateson, Erickson met Jay Haley, Richard Bandler and John Grinder, amongst others, and had a profound influence on them all. They went on to write several books about him.

In 1973, Jay Haley published *Uncommon Therapy*, which for the first time brought Erickson and his approaches to the attention of those outside the clinical hypnosis community. Erickson's fame and reputation spread rapidly, and so many people wished to meet him that he began holding teaching seminars, which continued until his death.

Milton H. Erickson died in March 1980, aged 78, leaving four sons, four daughters, and a lasting legacy to the worlds of psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, hypnotherapy, pedagogics and communications.

Hypnosis

Erickson is noted for his often unconventional approach to [psychotherapy](#), as described in the book *Uncommon Therapy* by Jay Haley and the book *Hypnotherapy: An Exploratory Casebook*, by Milton H. Erickson and Ernest L. Rossi (1979, New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc.). He developed an extensive use of therapeutic metaphor and [story](#) as well as hypnosis and coined the term [brief therapy](#) for his method of addressing therapeutic change in relatively few sessions.

Beginning in the 1950s, Erickson's use of interventions influenced [strategic therapy](#) and [family systems therapy](#) practitioners including Virginia Satir and Jay Haley. He was noted for his ability to "utilize" anything about a patient to help them change, including their beliefs, favorite words, cultural background, personal history, or even their neurotic habits.

Through conceptualizing the unconscious as highly separate from the conscious mind, with its own awareness, interests, responses, and learnings, he taught that the unconscious mind was creative, solution-generating, and often positive.

He was an important influence on [neuro-linguistic programming](#) (NLP), which was in part based upon his working methods.^[6]

Trance and the unconscious mind

Erickson believed that the unconscious mind was always listening and that, whether or not the patient was in trance, suggestions could be made which would have a hypnotic influence, as long as those suggestions found resonance at the unconscious level. The patient could be aware of this or could be completely oblivious that something was happening. Erickson would see if the patient would respond to one or another kind of indirect suggestion and allow the unconscious mind to participate actively in the therapeutic process. In this way, what seemed like a normal conversation might induce a hypnotic trance, or a therapeutic change in the subject. According to Weitzenhoffer, "[Erickson's] conception of the unconscious is definitely not the one held by Freud."^[6]

Erickson was an irrepressible practical joker,^[7] and it was not uncommon for him to slip indirect suggestions into all kinds of situations, including in his own books, papers, lectures and seminars.^[8] For example, a student arrived at one of the five-day intensive seminars he held in his home office near the end of his life. When Erickson asked why she had come, she replied frankly: "My teacher told me that I should come to see you before you died." Erickson smiled and said: "You tell him that dying is the last thing I intend to do." The group laughed at the pun. Then Erickson said, with a twinkle in his eye, "Do you want to know how to avoid dying? Always wake up every morning. And do you want to know how to ensure that you will wake up every morning?", he continued, "Drink lots of liquids before you go to sleep!"

Erickson also believed that it was even appropriate for the therapist to go into trance. *Continued on page 12*

Interesting Characters From The History of Hypnosis

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I go into trances so that I will be more sensitive to the intonations and inflections of my patients' speech. And to enable me to hear better, see better.

Erickson maintained that trance is a common, everyday occurrence. For example, when waiting for buses and trains, reading or listening, or even being involved in strenuous physical exercise, it's quite normal to become immersed in the activity and go into a trance state, removed from any other irrelevant stimuli. These states are so common and familiar that most people do not consciously recognize them as hypnotic phenomena.

The same situation is in evidence in everyday life, however, whenever attention is fixated with a question or an experience of the amazing, the unusual, or anything that holds a person's interest. At such moments people experience the common everyday trance; they tend to gaze off to the right or left, depending upon which cerebral hemisphere is most dominant (Baleen, 1969) and get that far away or blank look. Their eyes may actually close, their bodies tend to become immobile (a form of catalepsy), certain reflexes (e.g., swallowing, respiration, etc.) may be suppressed, and they seem momentarily oblivious to their surroundings until they have completed their inner search on the unconscious level for the new idea, response, or frames of reference that will restabilize their general reality orientation. We hypothesize that in everyday life consciousness is in a continual state of flux between the general reality orientation and the momentary microdynamics of trance...^[9]

Because Erickson expected trance states to occur naturally and frequently, he was prepared to exploit them therapeutically, even when the patient was not present with him in the consulting room. He also discovered many techniques for increasing the

likelihood that a trance state would occur. He developed both verbal and non-verbal techniques and pioneered the idea that the common experiences of wonderment, engrossment and confusion are, in fact, just kinds of trance.

Clearly, there are a great many kinds of trance. Many people are familiar with the idea of a "deep" trance, and earlier in his career Erickson was a pioneer in researching the unique and remarkable phenomena that are associated with that state, spending many hours at a time with individual test subjects, deepening the trance.

That a trance may be "light" or "deep" suggest a one-dimensional continuum of trance depth, but Erickson would often work with multiple trances in the same patient, for example, suggesting that the hypnotized patient behave "as if awake", thereby blurring the line between the hypnotic and awake state.

Erickson believed there are multiple states that may be utilized. This resonates with [Charles Tart's](#) idea (put forward in the book *Waking Up*) that all states of consciousness are trances and that what we call "normal" waking consciousness is just a "consensus trance". [NLP](#) also makes central use of the idea of changing state, without it explicitly being a hypnotic phenomenon.

Indirect techniques

Where classical hypnosis is authoritative and direct and often encounters resistance in the subject, Erickson's approach is permissive, accommodating and indirect.^[10] For example, where a classical hypnotist might say "You are going into a trance", an Ericksonian hypnotist would be more likely to say "you can comfortably learn how to go into a trance". In this way, he provides an opportunity for the subject to accept the suggestions they are most comfortable with, at their own pace, and with an awareness of the benefits. The subject knows they are not being hustled and takes full ownership of, and participates in, their transformation. Because the induction takes place

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during the course of a normal conversation, Ericksonian hypnosis is often known as Covert or Conversational Hypnosis.

Erickson maintained that it was not possible consciously to instruct the unconscious mind, and that authoritarian suggestions were likely to be met with resistance. The unconscious mind responds to openings, opportunities, metaphors, symbols, and contradictions. Effective hypnotic suggestion, then, should be "artfully vague", leaving space for the subject to fill in the gaps with their own unconscious understandings - even if they do not consciously grasp what is happening. The skilled hypnotherapist constructs these gaps of meaning in a way most suited to the individual subject - in a way which is most likely to produce the desired change.

For example, the authoritative "You will stop smoking" is likely to find less leverage on the unconscious level than "You can become a non-smoker". The first is a direct command, to be obeyed or ignored (and notice that it draws attention to the act of smoking); the second is an opening, an invitation to possible lasting change, without pressure, and is less likely to raise resistance.

[Richard Bandler](#) and [John Grinder](#) identified this kind of "artful vagueness" as a central characteristic of their '[Milton Model](#)', a systematic attempt to codify Erickson's hypnotic language patterns.

Confusion technique

In all my techniques, almost all, there is a confusion.

[11]

A confused person has their conscious mind busy and occupied, and is very much inclined to draw upon unconscious learnings to make sense of things. A confused person is in a trance of their own making -

and therefore goes readily into that trance without resistance. Confusion might be created by ambiguous words, complex or endless sentences, pattern interruption or a myriad of other techniques to incite [transderivational searches](#).

Scottish surgeon [James Braid](#), who coined the term "hypnotism", claimed that focused attention was essential for creating hypnotic trances; indeed, his thesis was that hypnosis was in essence a state of extreme focus. But it can be difficult for people racked by pain, fear or suspicion to focus on anything at all. Thus other techniques for inducing trance become important, or as Erickson explained:

... long and frequent use of the confusion technique has many times effected exceedingly rapid hypnotic inductions under unfavorable conditions such as acute pain of terminal malignant disease and in persons interested but hostile, aggressive, and resistant...

Resistance

Erickson recognized that many people were intimidated by hypnosis and the therapeutic process, and took care to respect the special resistances of the individual patient. In the therapeutic process he said that "you always give the patient every opportunity to resist". Here are some more relevant quotes pertaining to resistance:

Whatever the behavior offered by the subjects, it should be accepted and utilized to develop further responsive behavior. Any attempt to "correct" or alter the subjects' behavior, or to force them to do things they are not interested in, militates against trance induction and certainly deep trance experience.

If the patient can be led to accept one suggestion, they will more readily accept others. With resistant patients, it becomes necessary to find a suggestion that they can accept. Resistance is always important, and should always be respected, so if the resistance itself is encouraged,

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the patient is made to feel more comfortable, because they know that they are allowed to respond however they wish.

Many times, the apparently active resistance encountered in subjects is no more than an unconscious measure of testing the hypnotist's willingness to meet them halfway instead of trying to force them to act entirely in accord with his ideas.

Although the idea of working with resistance is essentially a hypnotic one, it goes beyond hypnosis and trance. In a typical example, a girl that bit her nails was told that she was cheating herself of really enjoying the nail biting. He encouraged her to let some of her nails grow a little longer before biting them, so that she really could derive the fullest pleasure from the activity. She decided to grow all of her nails long enough that she might really enjoy biting them, and then, after some days, she realized that she didn't want to bite them anyway.

Ericksonian Therapy

Erickson is most famous as a hypnotherapist, but his extensive research into and experience with hypnosis led him to develop an effective therapeutic technique. Many of these techniques are not explicitly hypnotic, but they are extensions of hypnotic strategies and language patterns. Erickson recognized that resistance to trance resembles resistance to change, and developed his therapeutic approach with that awareness.

Jay Haley identified several strategies, which appeared repeatedly in Erickson's therapeutic approach.

Encouraging Resistance - For Erickson, the classic therapeutic request to "tell me everything about..." was both aggressive and disrespectful, instead he

would ask the resistant patient to **withhold** information and only to tell what they were really ready to reveal:

I usually say, "There are a number of things that you don't want me to know about, that you don't want to tell me. There are a lot of things about yourself that you don't want to discuss, therefore let's discuss those that you **are** willing to discuss." She has blanket permission to withhold anything and everything. But she **did** come to discuss things. And therefore she starts discussing this, discussing that. And it's always "Well, this is all right to talk about." And before she's finished, she has mentioned everything. And each new item - "Well, this really isn't so important that I have to withhold it. I can use the withholding permission for more important matters." Simply a hypnotic technique. To make them respond to the idea of withholding, and to respond to the idea of communicating.^[12]

Some people might react to a direction by thinking "why should I?" or "You can't make me", called a polarity response because it motivates the subject to consider the polar opposite of the suggestion. The conscious mind recognizes negation in speech ("Don't do X") but according to Erickson, the unconscious mind pays more attention to the "X" than the injunction "Don't do". Erickson thus used this as the basis for suggestions that deliberately played on negation and tonally marked the important wording, to provide that whatever the client did, it was beneficial: "You don't have to go into a trance, so you can easily wonder about what you notice no faster than you feel ready to become aware that your hand is slowly rising....."

Providing a Worse Alternative (The 'Double Bind') - Example: "Do you want to go into a trance now, or later?" The '[double bind](#)' is a way of overloading the subject with two options, the acceptance of either of which represents acceptance of a therapeutic suggestion.

My first well-remembered intentional use of the double bind occurred in early [Continued on page 15](#)

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boyhood. One winter day, with the weather below zero, my father led a calf out of the barn to the water trough. After the calf had satisfied its thirst, they turned back to the barn, but at the doorway the calf stubbornly braced its feet, and despite my father's desperate pulling on the halter, he could not budge the animal. I was outside playing in the snow and, observing the impasse, began laughing heartily. My father challenged me to pull the calf into the barn. Recognizing the situation as one of unreasoning stubborn resistance on the part of the calf, I decided to let the calf have full opportunity to resist, since that was what it apparently wished to do. Accordingly I presented the calf with a double bind by seizing it by the tail and pulling it away from the barn, while my father continued to pull it inward. The calf promptly chose to resist the weaker of the two forces and dragged me into the barn.^[13]

Communicating by Metaphor - This is explored extensively in Sydney Rosen's *My Voice Will Go With You*, but an example is given in the first chapter of David Gordon's book *Phoenix*:

I was returning from high school one day and a runaway horse with a bridle on sped past a group of us into a farmer's yard looking for a drink of water. The horse was perspiring heavily. And the farmer didn't recognize it so we cornered it. I hopped on the horse's back. Since it had a bridle on, I took hold of the tick rein and said, "Giddy-up." Headed for the highway, I knew the horse would turn in the right direction. I didn't know what the right direction was. And the horse trotted and galloped along. Now and then he would forget he was on the highway and start into a field. So I would pull on him a bit and call his attention to the fact the highway was where he was **supposed** to be. And finally, about four miles from where I had boarded him, he turned into a farm yard and the farmer said, "So **that's** how that critter came back.

Where did you find him?" I said, "About four miles from here." "How did you know you should come **here**?" I said, "I didn't know. The **horse** knew. All I did was keep his attention on the road."

Erickson's metaphorical strategies can be compared with the [teaching tales](#) of the [Sufis](#) (those of for example the [Nasruddin](#)) and the [Zen](#) tradition of [Koans](#), each also designed to act on the unconscious mind.

Encouraging a Relapse - To bypass simple short-lived "obedience" which tends to lead to lapses in the absence of the therapist, Erickson would occasionally arrange for his patients to fail in their attempts to improve, for example by overreaching. Failure is part of life, and in that fragile time where the patient is learning to live, think and behave differently, a random failure can be catastrophic. Deliberately causing a relapse allowed Erickson to control the variables of that failure, and to cast it in a positive therapeutic light for the patient.

Encouraging a Response by Frustrating It - This paradoxical approach acts directly on the patient's own resistance to change. Obese patients are asked to gain weight, or in a family therapy session, a stubbornly silent family member is ignored until the frustration obliges them to blurt out some desperate truth. Once again, this approach has its roots in Erickson's hypnotic language patterns of the form "I don't want you to go into a trance yet". Compare this with "Prescribing the Symptom" (below).

Utilizing Space and Position - Hypnosis and therapy are experienced subjectively by the patient, and any part of their total experience can be used to reinforce an idea. The physical position or even the posture of the patient can be a significant part of the subjective experience. Manipulating these factors can contribute to a

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therapeutic transformation.

If I send someone out of the room - for example, the mother and child - I carefully move father from his chair and put him into mother's chair. Or if I send the child out, I might put mother in the child's chair, at least temporarily. Sometimes I comment on this by saying, 'As you sit where your son was sitting, you can think more clearly about him.' Or, 'If you sit where your husband sat, maybe it will give you somewhat of his view about me'. Over a series of interviews with an entire family, I shuffle them about, so that what was originally mother's chair is now where father is sitting. The family grouping remains, and yet that family grouping is being rearranged, which is what you are after when changing a family."^[14]

This may be directly compared with [Fritz Perls'](#) use of an "empty chair" as a context for imagined interactions (where the client was often invited to occupy the chair and thus take on the role of the person imagined to be sitting there); [Bert Hellinger's](#) approach, which requires the client to arrange family members (played by volunteers) in a row or pattern which matches the client's internal understanding, and then to reorganise the row; and [Virginia Satir's](#) work with tableaux and posture.

Emphasizing the Positive - Erickson claimed that his sensory "disabilities" (dyslexia, colour blindness, being tone-deaf) helped him to focus on aspects of communication and behavior which most other people overlooked. This is a typical example of emphasizing the positive.

Erickson would often compliment the patient for a symptom, and would even encourage it, in very specific ways. In one amusing example, a woman whose in-laws caused her nauseous feelings in the gut every time they visited unexpectedly was "taught" to vomit spectacularly whenever the visits were

especially inconvenient. Naturally the in-laws would always sympathetically help her clean up the vomit. Fairly soon, the annoying relatives started calling in advance before turning up, to see if she were "well enough" to see them.

The subject of dozens of songs, "emphasizing the positive" is a well known self-help strategy, and can be compared with "positive reformulation" in [Gestalt Therapy](#).

Prescribing the Symptom and Amplifying a Deviation - Very typically, Erickson would instruct his patients to actively and consciously perform the symptom that was bothering them (see the nail biting example under [#Resistance](#)), usually with some minor or trivial deviation from the original symptom. In many cases, the deviation could be amplified and used as a "wedge" to transform the whole behavior.

INTERVIEWER: Suppose someone called you and said there was a kid, nineteen or twenty years old, who has been a very good boy, but all of a sudden this week he started walking around the neighborhood carrying a large cross. The neighbors are upset and the family's upset, and would you do something about it. How would you think about that as a problem? Some kind of bizarre behavior like that.

ERICKSON: Well, if the kid came in to see me, the first thing I would do would be to want to examine the cross. And I would want to improve it in a very minor way. As soon as I got the slightest minor change in it, the way would be open for a larger change. And pretty soon I could deal with the advantages of a different cross - he ought to have at least two. He ought to have at least three so he could make a choice each day of which one. It's pretty hard to express a psychotic pattern of behavior over an ever-increasing number of crosses.^[14]

Seeding Ideas - Erickson would often ensure that the

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patients had been exposed to an idea, often in a metaphorical form (hidden from the conscious mind) in advance of utilizing it for a therapeutic purpose. He called this "seeding ideas", and it can be observed to occur at many levels both coarse and fine grained, in many of his case histories. In a simple example, the question "Have you ever been in a trance before?" seeds the idea that a trance is imminent - the presupposition inherent in the word before is "not now, but later".

Avoiding Self-Exploration - In common with most [brief therapy](#) practitioners, Erickson was entirely uninterested in analyzing the patient's early psychological development. Occasionally in his case histories, he will briefly discuss the patient's background, but only as much as it pertains to the resources available to the patient in the present.

INTERVIEWER: You don't feel that exploring the past is particularly relevant? I'm always trying to get clear in my mind how much of the past I need to consider when doing brief therapy.

ERICKSON: You know, I had one patient this last July who had four or five years of psychoanalysis and got nowhere with it. And someone who knows her said, "How much attention did you give to the past?" I said, "You know, I completely forgot about that." That patient is, I think, a reasonably cured person. It was a severe washing compulsion, as much as twenty hours a day. I didn't go in to the cause or the etiology; the only searching question I asked was "When you get in the shower to scrub yourself for hours, tell me, do you start at the top of your head, or the soles of your feet, or in the middle? Do you wash from the neck down, or do you start with your feet and wash up? Or do you start with your head and wash down?"

INTERVIEWER: Why did you ask that?

ERICKSON: So that she knew I was really interested.

INTERVIEWER: So that you could join her in this?

ERICKSON: No, so that she knew I was really interested.^[15]

Shocks and ordeals

Erickson is famous for pioneering indirect techniques, but his shock therapy tends to get less attention.

Erickson was prepared to use psychological shocks and ordeals in order to achieve given results:

When the old gentleman asked if he could be helped for his fear of riding in an elevator, I told him I could probably scare the pants off him in another direction. He told me that nothing could be worse than his fear of an elevator.

The elevators in that particular building were operated by young girls, and I made special arrangements with one in advance. She agreed to cooperate and thought it would be fun. I went with the gentleman to the elevator. He wasn't afraid of walking into an elevator, but when it started to move it became an unbearable experience. So I chose an unbusy time and I had him walk in and out of the elevator, back in and out. Then at a point when we walked in, I told the girl to close the door and said, "Let's go up." She went up one story and stopped in between floors. The gentleman started to yell, "What's wrong!" I said, "The elevator operator wants to kiss you." Shocked, the gentleman said, "But I'm a married man!" The girl said, "I don't mind that." She walked toward him, and he stepped back and said, "You start the elevator." So she started it. She went up to about the fourth floor and stopped it again between floors. She said, "I just have a craving for a kiss." He said, "You go about your business." He wanted that elevator moving, not standing still. She replied, "Well, let's go down and start all over again," and she began to take the elevator down. *Continued on page 18*

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He said, "Not down, up!" since he didn't want to go through that all over again.

She started up and then stopped the elevator between floors and said, "Do you promise you'll ride down in my elevator with me when you're through work?" He said, "I'll promise anything if you promise not to kiss me." He went up in the elevator, relieved and without fear - of the elevator - and could ride one from then on.^[14]

Influence on Others

Erickson's friend, and sometime collaborator, [Andre Weitzenhoffer](#), a well-known hypnosis researcher himself, has repeatedly raised concerns over the nature of Erickson's legacy.

The majority of today's Ericksonians consist of individuals who have never known Erickson, even less been directly trained by him. Today, and for some time now, much of the teaching of the Ericksonian approach is and has been done by individuals who have acquired their knowledge second and third hand. [...] Some of those who did spend time with Erickson, like Jeffrey Zeig, Ernest Rossi, and William O'Hanlon have tried, I believe, to present and preserve as much as they could what they believed and have understood Erickson's thought and methods to be. They have succeeded to do so to a fair degree. Others, like Richard Bandler and John Grinder have on the other hand, offered a much adulterated, and at times fanciful, version of what they perceived Erickson as saying and doing guided by their personal theorizing. [...] Further distortions have resulted outside of the United States due to translation problems as well as for other reasons. More and more the Ericksonians have become a heterogeneous group of practitioners.^[20]

One of his first students and developers of his work was [Jay Haley](#). Other important followers include [Stephen Gilligan](#), [Jeffrey K. Zeig](#) and [Stephen R. Lankton](#).

Erickson was [modeled](#) (see [Milton model](#)) by [Richard Bandler](#) and [John Grinder](#), the co-founders of [Neuro-linguistic programming](#) (NLP). As a result of the success of their research Erickson contributed the forward to their book *Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, M.D.*^[21]

In the sphere of business coaching and training, he influenced the methods that behavior training companies, such as [Erickson College International](#), [Krauthammer](#), [Gustav Käser Training International](#) or [Dynargie](#) used in communicating with coachees and training participants.

Books

Erickson was a prolific writer, often working in collaboration with others. His chief collaborator was [Ernest L. Rossi](#). His books include:

Hypnotic Realities [ISBN 0-8290-0112-3](#) (With Ernest L. Rossi)

Hypnotherapy - An Exploratory Casebook [ISBN 0-8290-0244-8](#) (With Ernest L. Rossi)

Experiencing Hypnosis [ISBN 0-8290-0246-4](#) (With Ernest L. Rossi)

The Practical Application of Medical and Dental Hypnosis [ISBN 0-87630-570-2](#) (with Seymour Hershman and Irving I. Secter) (out of print)

Time Distortion in Hypnosis [ISBN 1-899836-95-0](#) (With Linn F. Cooper)

His clinical papers have been collected into a four volume work:

Collected Papers on Hypnosis: Volume 1 - Nature of Hypnosis and Suggestion [ISBN 0-8290-1206-0](#) (Ernest L. Rossi, Editor)

Collected Papers on Hypnosis: Volume 2 - Sensory, Perceptual and Psychophysiological Processes [ISBN 0-8290-1207-9](#) (Ernest L. Rossi, Editor)

Collected Papers on Hypnosis: Volume 3 - Hypnotic Investigation of Psychodynamic

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Processes [ISBN 0-8290-1208-7](#) (Ernest L. Rossi, Editor)

Collected Papers on Hypnosis: Volume 4 - Innovative Hypnotherapy [ISBN 0-8290-1209-5](#) (Ernest L. Rossi, Editor)

- note, these four volumes are sometimes made available digitally under the misleading (and erroneous) name 'Complete Works'.

Some books collecting transcriptions of his lectures and seminars:

My Voice Will Go With You - The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson [ISBN 0-393-30135-4](#) (Sidney Rosen, Editor)

Seminars, Workshops and Lectures of Milton H. Erickson Volume 1 - Healing in Hypnosis [ISBN 1-85343-405-1](#) (Margaret O. Ryan & Florence Sharp, Editors)

Seminars, Workshops and Lectures of Milton H. Erickson Volume 2 - Life Reframing in Hypnosis [ISBN 0-8290-1581-7](#) (Florence Sharp, Editor)

Seminars, Workshops and Lectures of Milton H. Erickson Volume 3 - Mind-Body Communication in Hypnosis [ISBN 0-8290-1805-0](#) (Ernest L. Rossi, Editor)

Seminars, Workshops and Lectures of Milton H. Erickson Volume 4 - Creative Choice in Hypnosis [ISBN 1-85343-421-3](#) (Ernest L. Rossi & Margaret O. Ryan, Editors)

Conversations with Milton H. Erickson, M.D., edited by Jay Haley (WW Norton and Company: New York, 1999)

Volume I: Changing Individuals

Volume II: Changing Couples

Volume III: Changing Children and Families

Milton H. Erickson, M.D.: In His Own Voice, edited by Jay Haley and co-edited by Madeleine Richeport (WW Norton & Company: New York, 1991).

Sex Therapy - The Female

Sex Therapy - The Male

Problem Drinkers

Multiple Personalities

Other works which collect specific parts of Erickson's output:

The Wisdom of Milton H Erickson: The Complete Volume [ISBN 1-904424-17-1](#) (Ronald A.Havens, Editor)

An Uncommon Casebook: Complete Clinical Work of Milton H.Erickson, M.D. [ISBN 0-393-70101-8](#) (William Hudson O'Hanlon & Angela L. Hexum)

Many books have been written about Erickson and his techniques, which typically include extended citations from his papers, lectures and workshops, including:

Milton H. Erickson, M.D.: An American Healer (Profiles in Healing series) [ISBN 0918172551](#) [ISBN 978-0918172556](#) (Bradford Keeney PhD (Editor), Betty Alice Erickson MS (Editor)

Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H.Erickson: Volume 1 [ISBN 1-55552-052-9](#), John Grinder & Richard Bandler

Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H.Erickson: Volume 2 [ISBN 1-55552-053-7](#), John Grinder, Richard Bandler & Judith DeLozier

Milton H.Erickson (Key Figures in Counselling & Psychotherapy Series) [ISBN 0-8039-7575-9](#) (Jeffrey K. Zeig & W. Michael Munion)

[Uncommon Therapy: Psychiatric Techniques of Milton H.Erickson, M.D.](#) by Jay Haley (WW Norton & Company: New York, 1993).

The Answer Within: A Clinical Framework of Ericksonian Hypnotherapy [ISBN 978-1-84590-121-9](#) (Stephen Lankton & Carol Hicks Lankton)

Assembling Ericksonian Therapy [ISBN 1-932462-10-4](#) (Stephen Lankton)

Phoenix: Therapeutic Patterns of Milton H.Erickson [ISBN 0-916990-10-9](#) (David Gordon, Maribeth Meyers-Anderson)

Enchantment and Intervention in Family Therapy: Using Metaphors in Family Therapy [ISBN 978-1-84590-083-0](#) (Stephen Lankton & Carol Hicks Lankton)

[A Guide to Trance Land: A Practical Handbook of Ericksonian and Solution-Oriented Hypnosis](#) by Bill O'Hanlon (WW Norton &

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Company: New York, 2009).

[Healing the Divided Self: Clinical and Ericksonian Hypnotherapy for Dissociative Conditions](#) by Claire Frederick and Maggie Phillips (WW Norton & Company: New York, 1995).

[Solution-Oriented Hypnosis: An Ericksonian Approach](#) by Bill O'Hanlon and Michael Martin (WW Norton & Company: New York, 1991).

[Resolving Sexual Abuse: Solution-Focused Therapy and Ericksonian Hypnosis for Adult Survivors](#) by Yvonne M. Dolan (WW Norton & Company: New York, 1991).

[My Voice Will Go With You: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson](#) by Sidney Rosen (WW Norton & Company: New York, 1991)

[Taproots: Underlying Principles of Milton Erickson's Therapy and Hypnosis](#) by Bill O'Hanlon (WW Norton & Company: New York 1981).

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Membership Report

Currently, we have 60 members. 11 at CH, 2 honourary, 5 at HT, 18 at RH and 14 at ST.

Standards

Angela Bain

Congratulations to Sandra Wall who is now Counselling Hypnotherapist (Cand.).

Petra McNaughton has become a Counselling Hypnotherapist. Well done.

Please note that if you are a Counselling Hypnotherapist (Cand.) you might want to check if you have 600 hrs. of practice with clients which is what you need to upgrade.

Hypno Tidbit

Have you ever wondered about time Maybe wonder is really wander Can one wander in time Could one wander in this time Or that time Is that really any time to wander in ... I wonder.... Time is a great teacher it is For something that may be a construct Teaches Yes it really does teach And then again it also teaches Yes remembered that one Time when the next breath was followed by a moving deep into the movement in time and space to To exactly where the unconscious wants to wander today.... In this time and In this time and this space So handy being able to

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