

The New Hypnosis

The Utilization of Personal Resources in Ericksonian Practice and Training

edited by

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Preface

Hypnosis has regained strength in Europe since the 1980's. In Italy and Austria hypnotherapy is now an officially acknowledged therapeutic procedure, and in Germany it is officially accepted as an adjunct to behaviour therapy, and reimbursed by health insurance companies. Moreover, hypnosis is about to find its way into clinics and other medical institutions; and last but not least, to the European universities as an accepted subject for rigorous investigation. Responsible for this development are the intensive efforts of clinicians and researchers who have organised themselves into various local hypnosis societies and institutes, which have spread throughout the European countries since the 1970's. Milton H. Erickson, MD and some of his students share the principle responsibility for this sweeping influence. Ericksonian Hypnosis became the quality standard for the modern, the New Hypnosis of the late 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.

The term, "The New Hypnosis," was used for the first time by Daniel L. Araoz (1982). He put forth a type of hypnosis and psychotherapy distinguished by the following: "more naturalistic, spontaneous and experiential ... facilitates one's personal experience of self, cuts through the layers of negative self-hypnosis ... it helps us to change our set beliefs to a new openness, to the evolving, changing, flow which is life, to participate more fully in our becoming through experiencing" (Araoz, 1995, p. 88).

Although "The New Hypnosis" doesn't correspond to Ericksonian hypnosis, it is certainly inspired by the clinical work and the seminal ideas of Milton Erickson. We like to regard it as a set of concepts that proposes a new style of attention, new diagnostic tools, new methods of approach to the problem and new forms of therapeutic solutions that places subjects and their resources in the central position.

These concepts certainly belong to many other different models of psychotherapy extending from Rogers (1959) when he recognised "the inherent capacity of the organism to develop all its capacities which serve to maintain or embrace the organism" to Whitaker when he describes the therapist "like the football coach who pushes the players to increase their aerobic tolerance, and encourages their full use of self, their spontaneity, and their initiative" (Whitaker 1989, p. 158).

We can even recognise this manner of looking at the therapeutic experience by going back to the old times with some of the ideas of Mesmer, Janet, Bernheim, and Freud. And even when hypnosis takes different forms - direct or indirect, formally or not formally induced - we agree with Weitzenhoffer's statement that there is "no doubt that Milton Erickson used the word hypnosis and its derivatives to denote essentially the same phenomenology as has been generally described for the last 150 years (Weitzenhoffer, 1989, p. 190).

Hypnosis and its phenomena have not changed over time, but it is our understanding of how we look at it and how we use it that has evolved. One can like or not the term "The New Hypnosis", and one can include in it some concepts and

not others. However, it is true that hypnosis has gained new attention and respect, in a period of time in which many other therapies are experiencing some degree of difficulty. Maybe it is the advances derived from neuro-imagery that offers new empirical support to the hypnotic phenomena once considered "invisible" and therefore scientifically questionable. Maybe, it is the new conception of hypnotic rapport that strives for a more balanced relationship between the hypnotist and the subject. In any case, we can be pleased that the "oldest of all psychotherapies" has been able to renew itself and to adapt to the modern times and thus deserves our profound consideration.

A significant measure of the new stature of hypnosis today is the increasing number of qualified international congresses, and the interest they are able to engender inside and outside the field. In recent years and in addition to the various national hypnosis congresses, a European Congress of Ericksonian Hypnosis and Psychotherapy was created. The first of these congresses (Peter & Schmidt, 1992) took place in Heidelberg, Germany, September 20 - 24 1989; the second in Munich, October 3 - 7 1995 (Peter et al., 1996). The third Ericksonian Congress was held November 25 - 28, 1998 in Venice, Italy, organised by the first editor of this volume, Camillo Lorigo. As has been our experience highly respected colleagues from the American and international hypnosis communities presented their recent findings and insights at this special congress in Venice. We are also very pleased to acknowledge that the greatest number of contributions came for our hosting country, Italy. We sincerely thank every one of these contributors from around the world. In the pages that follow, we proudly present in this 5th Volume of Hypnosis International Monographs, a selection of the most intriguing contributions to this inspiring congress.

Camillo Lorigo and Burkhard Peter

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Erickson Remembered

■ This chapter is dedicated to the use of associative mental processes in clinical practice as proposed by Milton Erickson. Different ways of eliciting associations are illustrated and specific interventions aimed at changing them are offered. Since psychotherapy has been described by Erickson as the reassociation of internal life, an extensive discussion of the application of this concept is presented. Specific Ericksonian modalities, defined as "postures" that therapists can assume to intervene in the process of eliciting associations, are described.

Jeffrey K. Zeig

Introduction

The title of this paper is "Erickson Remembered." However, I do not intend to present a tribute. Rather, I will investigate how Erickson-inspired clinicians can elicit memorable and constructive associations in their clinical work. Milton Erickson once wisely defined psychotherapy as the reassociation of internal life. A purpose of this paper is to develop that idea. Another broader aim is to list global aspects of Erickson's style that dovetail with his method of eliciting constructive associations. In fact, as we will see, eliciting associations can be considered a personal style as much as, or even more than, it can be considered a "method." In this paper I will present therapeutic styles, or "postures" as I prefer to call them. I will use Erickson as a model and describe postures that underlie his approach.

I will begin with a terrible joke. The redeeming grace of the joke is that it was published in *Science*, a prestigious academic journal. It goes: "Why is an elephant large and dark and irregularly shaped?" The answer is "Because if it were white and round and regular, it would be an aspirin."

This joke makes me think of a question that has perplexed me for more than 20 years: Why is Milton Erickson large and dark and irregularly shaped? Believe me, I have had plenty of headaches trying to answer that question.

Over the years, I have developed models to understand Erickson. Initially, I investigated the technical side. I wanted to answer questions such as, "How does one do hypnosis? How does one create an effective confusion technique? How can one use the