



*Clear Thinking newsletter from Uncommon Knowledge - Issue 80*

In this month's Clear Thinking...

1. All about the Ericksonian approach to hypnosis
2. Online course: Precision Hypnosis

## **Why Ericksonian hypnosis is the best**

*3 smart ways to make your hypnosis work better*

A teenage boy finds his burly father desperately failing to push a reluctant cow into a barn. The young lad, weak from a recent bout of polio, comes up behind the recalcitrant cow and firmly tugs on its tail. The cow immediately heads in the opposite direction... *into the barn*. Problem solved.

That farm boy was [Milton Erickson](#), arguably the greatest psychotherapist in history. He never founded a school of therapy as such, but 'Ericksonian hypnosis' is the name commonly give to the particular style of hypnotherapy he espoused. For myself, I like to think of Erickson as more of a discoverer than an inventor.

### **Ericksonian hypnosis – it's more than 'Ericksonian'**

'Ericksonian hypnosis' is grounded in *psychology* – the psychology which is common to every one of us. We don't talk of 'Newtonian gravity'. Newton did not invent gravity. What he did was to identify and explain and use the phenomenon that was already there, all around us.

Ericksonian hypnosis is grounded in *universal principles of psychology*, which is why his approaches have proved so effective.

If you want to sum up the Ericksonian approach, you could hardly do better than to call it '*targeted intervention based on clear perception of the current needs of a unique individual*'. He had no rigid protocol other than to pay close attention to the person in front of him and to work out what would best suit

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that person's needs. This called for acute insight and total flexibility. He was a master of the 'surprise solution' – the universal hypnotic principle by which a sudden shock triggers our 'orientation response' and makes us wide open to suggestion. And he always knew what to suggest at that critical moment!

### **A shock is as good as a change!**

Erickson was once treating a young woman who, convinced that her (perfectly normally sized) feet were too big and ugly, stopped going out at all. Erickson engineered a home visit to the woman's sick mother (he was also an MD), and while there 'accidentally on purpose' stepped back on the woman's foot. As she recoiled in shock he said loudly, "If only you could grow those feet big enough for a man to see!"

### **3 steps to better hypnosis**

Here are three ways you can apply an 'Ericksonian' approach

#### **1. Focus on the bigger patterns behind the technique**

When you can see what's needed, you don't need to theorize or over-complicate.

We teach therapists and counselors the 'rewind technique', a very reliable and comfortable way of relieving people of their traumas and phobias. We are always careful to teach the principles *behind* this technique. This ensures that, if there is a need, the *principle* can still be effectively applied even if the process used might not even be recognized as 'rewind technique' by a casual observer.

Learn about *psychological principles* so that you can focus on the bigger patterns that transcend rigid techniques. .

#### **2. Use the awesome power of implication**

Erickson knew the difference between just telling somebody something (which can easily be rejected) and making them *feel something new*.

The unconscious mind is hard-wired to respond to subliminal stimuli through implication. For example, you can get someone feeling more relaxed without giving a single direct suggestion. *Implication* does it all:

***"When people **start to relax deeply...** they really begin to **feel more comfortable...** and when they do... they... **notice the breathing... just... begin... to... slow... down...**"***

On the face of it, you are talking about 'other people', not the person in front of you. But we all unconsciously associate to 'other people'...

#### **3. Take what's given you**

Have you ever noticed how some therapists love to sprinkle their talk with jargon? Erickson was much more interested in learning about the language, interests, idiosyncrasies and idioms of his patients rather than confusing or

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intimidating them with jargon concepts like 'time lines' and 'inner child' and all the rest of it. Jargon has its place, of course, but that place is probably not the therapy room!

Instead, Erickson was a master of 'utilization'. Putting effort into really finding out about the patient allowed him to talk the language of his patient and creatively form his approach around *their* current reality. For example, Erickson created a highly effective hypnotic induction based on how tomatoes grow for one patient who was in severe terminal pain. He had found out that the man had been a keen gardener, and was particularly proud of his tomatoes, and this analogy worked for him because of the personal association.

So to a soccer fan we might talk about their 'goals', or how we can 'kick off' with a little relaxation so they can really start to 'get on top of their game'. To a computer programmer we may talk of 'updating' their mind to 'run more smoothly'. But you won't be able to do this unless you spend time learning the 'jargon' that matters to your client.

'Ericksonian' problem solving existed before Milton Erickson came on the scene. Use these principles to transcend the limits of theory and increases your therapeutic and hypnotic effectiveness and creativity.

## Mastering Ericksonian skills

If you are interested to know more about how you can apply Ericksonian principles in therapy, you can [learn Ericksonian hypnosis](#) online with us.

And if you are already skilled in Ericksonian techniques, you can take them to a new level with our [advanced hypnosis course, Precision Hypnosis](#). The next course starts on 9 November, so you could get it done in time for Christmas. An excellent present for yourself!

See you in a fortnight.

[Mark Tyrrell](#)

Co-Founder

Uncommon Knowledge

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