

# **Uncommon Therapy: The Psychiatric Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, M.D. Study Guide**

**Uncommon Therapy: The Psychiatric Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, M.D. by Jay Haley**

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## Plot Summary

This is work that describes some psychotherapeutic techniques. These include a combination of hypnotic and and other methods for changing behaviors or mentalities of individuals. The author Jay Haley provides a rather thorough examination of the methodologies used by Milton Erickson in his practice. This covers beliefs, knowledge of who the patients are, and extensive discussion of therapy. The book begins with a preface in which the author explains a little bit about the subject. The type of therapy involved is mainly family therapy. The methods use include hypnosis. The first chapters cover the most essential stages of personal development. Haley shows how Erickson operates as a therapist and how he uses the problems that a patient has as the very means through which to find the solution. Adolescence and the courtship stage of life are covered extensively. Through the use of examples Haley shows how Erickson is able to use hypnosis as but one method among several to heal his patients. Erickson does not concern either himself or his patients with the causes of his client's problems. Other forms of therapy do strive to help clients to understand why they are how they are, with the belief that this will help the individual move towards healing. Erickson will make use of his awareness of what caused an individual to be in his or her current condition - but only to heal even more effectively than he would otherwise.

Halfway into the book, symptoms found in individuals are revealed to actually pertain to a dynamic that includes the extended family and their attitudes. There are even times when a therapist who is forced to treat only one member of a family ends up contributing to what amounts to "trouble." The example used is that of a young woman who had an abnormal hand tremor. This had been diagnosed as hysteria on her part and had worsened through a previous effort at treatment. It turned out that the situation was complex and that it was mainly resolved only when the young woman became pregnant. When she did, her husband switched from being supported by her after a loss of social status related to his employment, and her parents stopped tormenting her for including her husband. Her mother had been openly undermining their entire relationship, urging her daughter to ditch him and come home to mother. Knowledge of Milton Erickson's techniques are shared through exposition by the author Jay Haley and extensive notes from Milton Erickson himself. It is highly readable and ends with a quintessential note of finality. Erickson declines to take on a patient who he helped in the past, who Erickson does not believe he can help when asked to do so a second time.



# **Book 1, Uncommon Therapy : Chapter 1, Preface & Strategic Therapy**

## **Book 1, Uncommon Therapy : Chapter 1, Preface & Strategic Therapy Summary and Analysis**

In the Preface, the author describes Erickson and his work in the field of psychotherapy. Jay Haley explains that the psychotherapy efforts of Erickson have grown in their popularity since late in Erickson's lifetime. Haley also explains how an important condition changed during Erickson's life. This was the development and introduction into therapies of "family orientation." Here, the individual is viewed within the context of the family, and counseling that takes place often includes aspects that have been most strongly imprinted and influenced by familial dynamics. In fact, it is often the case that the work the clients are in therapy to do is to improve their relations with self and other family members. Chapter 1 is "Strategic Therapy": the clinician is the one who initiates events within the context of therapy and does so to achieve specific ends.

During the the 1950s, there was still debate about how to facilitate desirable change in patients. Hypnosis is described as a special way of communicating. Voluntary and involuntary behavior is discussed to show how therapeutic techniques transform an individual into being able to perform certain new behaviors. The first heading is "Encouraging Resistance"; wherein, the individual in therapy is re-educated to view resistance as a form of cooperation in its own right. "Providing a Worse Alternative" is also used for negative reinforcement and as a means to redirect patients. "Causing Change by Communicating in Metaphor" shows how indirect communication can be better therapy in some cases. "Encouraging a Relapse" is shown to help work out residual resistance to desirable changes. "Encouraging a Response by Frustrating It" shows how Erickson gets the husband to enter therapy just to straighten out the therapist. "The Use of Space and Position" involves subjective aspects of time. "Emphasizing the Positive" is rooted in two ideas: that at least many unconscious motives are beneficial and that positive reinforcement is most effective in influencing behavior. "Seeding Ideas" is the most hypnotic focus. "Amplifying a Deviation" cultivates a response until a goal is reached. "Amnesia and Control of Information" is also part of intentional hypnotic conditioning. Here it is observed that uniformly siding with one family member and the creating of factions by the therapist is discouraged. "Awakening and Disengagement" : Erickson emphasized both the autonomy and togetherness of family members. Overemphasis on either can undermine its counterpart. "Avoiding Self-Exploration": Therapy now helps patients make changes without any focus on understanding why the previous behavior had existed. "The Family Life Cycle" is brief.



# Book 1, Uncommon Therapy : Chapter 2, The Family Cycle

## Book 1, Uncommon Therapy : Chapter 2, The Family Cycle Summary and Analysis

The headings to this chapter are: "The Courtship Period": Here the author notes that among humans, the mating style appears to vary innately. Some, but not all, will naturally mate for life; others will not. This evidently affects the culture. The period of adolescence which often closely predates major mating activity is one of the most important times for people to receive any needed therapy. Therapy is meant to facilitate the transition of a person from the situation of being a child into being an independent adult. This involves rearrangement of the relational patterns between family members. "Marriage and Its Consequences": The author writes that the marriage ceremony is actually very important to more than just those who are marrying. Here, there is a need for the entire family to make a major adjustment towards the relationship of another family member but also to another family.

"Childbirth and Dealing With the Young": Haley explains that what occurs here is that couples are faced with dynamic challenges. A reasonably stable and comfortable arrangement can be created; then, circumstances change, and a new way of finding their equilibrium as a couple is needed. This pattern involving a built-in need for making changes and adjustments is part of this phase of life. The presence of a child or children creates a variant of the "love triangle" which only grows in complexity with the advent of additional children. Therapists often discover that habituated communication problems and other issues - including the involvement of grandparents, are all highly relevant to the families at this juncture. The need to help the growing youths integrate into the community life without insufficient or excessive familial involvement is important throughout and continues when people have become parents. "Middle Marriage Difficulties": Here the author explains that therapy must take into account the reality of how factors outside the marriage and beyond the individual partners have an affect upon what happens and may contain suggestions and warnings about the way to navigate a set of solutions. Family stress is most severe when someone is entering or leaving the family. When children have left home and can no longer "be used to communicate between the parents," the parents are often confronted with each other in a different way. "Weaning Parents From Children": Children develop their own roles within families. Parents face serious changes when they leave. "Retirement and Old Age": these are final stages of life.



# Chapter 3, The Courtship Period - Changing the Young Adult

## Chapter 3, The Courtship Period - Changing the Young Adult Summary and Analysis

In the first section of this chapter, Haley describes how Erickson is able to assist young adults into being better able to overcome difficulties. He does not attempt to change their fundamental nature and does not even try to directly confront the real problem. Haley indirectly helps by encouraging the client in taking steps towards the solutions to problems. There may be fears, insecurities and inadequacies involved, but Erickson is not so interested in these or in explaining all about the shortcomings to the client, but rather Erickson focuses on helping the client to work towards success in areas of life. Haley explains that there are times when peers rather than the family of origin are the real source of the problem. Haley cites one example which displays how Erickson worked. He was able to encourage an "asthmatic Mama's boy" out of the role of sickly and meek and out into the realm of working in banking. Erickson asked after the job, which the client had claimed no interest in initially. After the client secured the job, the therapist asked for details about how corrections were made when the client revealed that there had been mistakes. This type of reinforcement was incredibly effective and the illness - the asthma, fell from the forefront into the background of the client's life. In another example, a client's intense fear is eventually overcome by Erickson's encouragement and relating to the patient's strengths. Lengthy discussion of the muscles and how to better build his body leads the client step by step entirely out of his troubles. In the end, a fear of women that had been troubling was overcome but Erickson never even discussed that fear with this client, but the problem was solved through his indirect approach. During this part of the chapter, Erickson actually selected a patient whose needs had come to his attention.

Haley shares a number of specific examples in this chapter. The focus is on helping young people- adolescents, overcome difficulties that have interfered with their courtship behavior. In most of the examples referred to, success in dating leads not only into marriage, but also into parenting. Erickson's therapy includes and involves helping the adolescent patients to overcome their fears surrounding these issues. He does this by addressing the problem directly in some cases and indirectly in others. Where additional education is needed, he recommends it; for instance, professional beauty assistants can educate girls whose mothers or other older women did not properly train in make up or fashion. He writes of withholding and sharing information and of how he succeeds in curing a young woman of pain she experiences during menstruation.



# Chapter 4, Character Revision of the Young Adult

## Chapter 4, Character Revision of the Young Adult Summary and Analysis

Haley explains that in the most severe cases, Erickson would consider long-term therapy; otherwise, his relationship with clients last only a few weeks. This is in contrast to other forms of talk therapy where there is a greater emphasis on understanding the client, and the relationship tends to involve weekly meetings for years on end. When Erickson conducts long-term therapy, he does not do it as one extensive and lengthy contact with meetings once each week for years. Instead, he varies the frequency of appointments. Further, when the client's real need is social contact, Erickson goes out of his way to actually artificially create relationships for his patients. Once he helps a patient to establish contact, he then keeps out of that friendship so that it takes its own natural course. Readers should be cautious about jumping to conclusions as far as what Erickson exactly means by "revision of nature." He uses trance to release people from deep-seated behavior patterns, some of which have been counter productive or relied upon to reduce fears regarding otherwise unexplored territories of experience.

The first case includes but is not limited to a man who asserts that he is homosexual and hates women. He is also financially poor and an idiot. This man's name is Harold. His is one of the relatively rare cases when Erickson sees a patient over the course of many years. Even so, the frequency of the contact varies over the total course of the therapy. Erickson does not attempt to change everything about this man all at once. In other cases, he offers patients the option to effectively make more complete changes in a shorter time span. In these cases, he assures them that they can, but the greater the transformation - the greater the psychological shock associated with the changes that will be facilitated by hypnosis. A prominent concern is a family entanglement in which Harold needs to alter the dynamic with himself and one of his siblings who is one member of an alcoholic couple. Erickson does not tell Harold there is anything wrong with his sexual orientation; he tells Harold that he wants to put Harold into a position to be open to changing or keeping his ideas about himself. After other deep work is done and Harold has some very enjoyable experiences with women he changes his mind of his own accord. Either he wasn't truly homosexual in the first place, but had other troubles with women, or was a bisexual who was turned on to women once his fears of them had been properly addressed.



## Chapter 4, Part 2

### Chapter 4, Part 2 Summary and Analysis

Harold is able to move through these challenges. None of this could have happened if he had not managed to get himself to therapy but he did. It becomes apparent that Harold is very diligent and quite a good worker. Once he overcomes the severe effects of the poverty of his childhood, he manages to develop a new habit of dressing himself well, and of spending money on his own attire. Next, Harold succeeds in cultivating a friendship with an unintelligent handicapped man who has been highly effective at making the best of who he is. Erickson starts this relationship but does not control it. Eventually, through a lengthy process including both success and failure, Erickson gets Harold to complete high school and try college. Harold succeeds. When Harold has done so, Erickson persuades him to drop the idea that he is somehow feeble minded. After Harold has acquired better habits of dress, he begins to spontaneously seek better work and to get it. Harold's work ethic is quite good and so he carries on. Erickson addresses Harold's anxieties and hatred about women in a simple way. He initiates a relationship with a woman who teaches him. Through this nonsexual relationship, Harold has the opportunity to have some good experiences with at least one woman.

Only after all that has been achieved, did Harold happen into a heterosexual relationship. In this case it was an older woman neighbor. Somehow, in a way that seemed outside of Harold's control, they had dinner together. This happened a couple times, and they ended up having some relatively domestic dates: they shared a meal; they danced together and enjoyed music at home. This led into sexual relations. Harold's experience with this was so good that he voluntarily reconsidered his own views and chose to pursue women and to have more normal sexual relations. He became negative about the younger men with whom he had had been sexually involved in a limited sense. Erickson's use of intentional forms of amnesia as part of the trance is done in order to alleviate the distress of patients and to empower individuals to make certain changes. Of course it is strange that these remain mysteriously wrapped - it is almost analogous to having seen his patients nude, examined them, had them redress and then treat them as if he either has no idea what they look like naked or else with the certainty that it is okay that he has. The amnesia seems to be for the purpose of helping the clients themselves to be able to feel as if he has not invaded them. He operates strangely as a psychiatrist in that he often maneuvers people into being able to make changes by interpreting everything as a form of cooperation.





# Chapter 5, Marriage and Its Consequences

## Chapter 5, Marriage and Its Consequences Summary and Analysis

Erickson and Haley both admit that not all young adults want to marry. The author does not mention the issue of whether or not to parent when he mentions the matter of marriage. Next, Haley writes that the majority of the young adults who the therapist meets with do want to marry; that is, they do want to proceed into the lifestyle of becoming and being married parents. Addressing their fears and insecurities while helping them to make some needed transformations are all part of the therapy for those who want this. Why they were resisting any of these could also readily become part of the therapy.

One of the most prominent facts about this chapter is that sexual difficulties early in a marriage are a common and readily treatable problem. Often enough, if the woman did not have a good experience with sex from the beginning she would seek an annulment of the marriage. Erickson typically conducts therapy to the goal of keeping a couple together except for two types of case: one, if the couple feels the marriage was a mistake, and second, in the event that the marriage puts either or both members of it into danger. In those cases, he conducts therapy with the intention of causing the couple to separate and to get a divorce. The cases in this chapter typically include both parties in the couple. The therapist deals with each part of the couple separately and together, as a general rule. Erickson mentions that in cases where the woman won't let the man talk, as the therapist, he will either get her to keep her mouth shut and listen or will make her leave. After he has conversed with the husband, he will then reunite the pair and triangulate the situation. It is at these times that he inserts directives. Part of Erickson's role was to orchestrate plans that resolve the differences between the wife and the husband. Another trouble that can occur was exemplified in the case of a young wife with a trembling hand. Here, the problem seemed to be that the woman was hysterical. In truth the challenge was that she wanted her husband to support her, when as things stood, he would not, and in fact, she had been supporting them both. The implication is that the hysterical symptom shows that this is against her will. In this case, the therapeutic intervention was to get the marriage into something that was in at least some respects more traditional with respect to traditional gender roles.

## Chapter 5, Part 2

### Chapter 5, Part 2 Summary and Analysis

Haley writes of one case in which a woman was directly threatened with death by her husband over the gender of their baby. The therapist was ignorant in matters of baby gender prediction, but he did recommend divorce to avert disaster. In the other sort of case, the therapist often encourages dissent within a couple. As long as they are able to remain civil and reasonably safe and sane in their fighting, Erickson strongly approved of it, with one condition. This condition was that they seek to genuinely resolve the difference or disagreement in a conclusive and definitive manner. Here he shows some faith in the belief in letting nature run her course.

Haley writes about a case in which a wealthy woman had to be trained into more full awareness of her feelings of acceptance during her childhood and how this set a healthy foundation for her to feel confident in her ability to be a good mother. Haley shows how Erickson applied therapy when the challenge was to help new parents over into the phase of life of being parents. He writes of a case in which a new mother was so distraught that she was hospitalized; the trouble was that in some cases, the receipt of treatment is used by others in the greater familial context as an excuse to unfairly exclude the one who had been hospitalized. The change is drastic, even if her figure is not heavily affected. Here, there was competition between the mother and the mother-in-law over mothering the new baby. The new grandmother's aggressive willingness to help with the baby undermined the upset and inexperienced new mother from fulfilling her role. She received therapy for a few months and then simply lost or stuffed down her symptoms and is written of as having behaved normally since.

Erickson's approach is summed up by Haley here: Erickson first accepts the patient's self-assessment. Erickson is also truthful to the client. This includes acknowledging that the pain or other problem may continue for some time. This is not reassuring in the usual sense but sets the patient and therapist up as members of the same team and is done to move them both towards accomplishing a goal together. Erickson is also flexible in his approach, adjusting his treatment to each specific individual. Haley points out that Erickson had suffered from polio twice and had been debilitated by it. As part of his own road to recovery, after each occurrence he made a long journey with built-in challenges designed to strengthen him, and they were very effective.



# Chapter 6, Childbirth and Rearing the Young

## Chapter 6, Childbirth and Rearing the Young Summary and Analysis

This chapter focuses upon the arrival of offspring. Haley observes that there are repercussions throughout the family system, meaning people of the families that led up to this union are effected by the turn of events. Haley touches on what has come to be referred to as post-partum depression or maternal psychosis. In the most extreme cases, the mother might be hospitalized. This either forces or allows other relatives, be it the father or extended family, a great chance to take care of the baby unless the family dynamic is one of separation, in which case the father and the mother are the only relatives available to help with the baby. When the mother does receive therapy, the reasons for why she is so upset about becoming a mother are discussed and where possible her fears are soothed. Erickson had one case where the mother was very distraught. Haley cites another of Erickson's cases where the mother was ultimately left out. There is no clarity on whether it was a ruse. Perhaps she did not want to be a mother but had no recourse other than to plead a kind of insanity so that the others would take control from her, or she possibly was mentally ill. She was labeled with schizophrenia and Erickson concluded her to be an unresolvable case.

This chapter is distinctive in that there are no subheadings in it. There are numerous cases referred to in this chapter. One is about a sore that festered for two years. This was resolved, but only when the therapist's interventions had a direct influence upon the entire family dynamics. Strange as it sounds, in order to heal the sore on a child's body, it was necessary for the boy's father to take over performing the domestic chores his son had been doing. In addition to this, the dynamic between the parents was affected because they paid attention to one another in relation to the chores in a different way. Meanwhile, the therapist took personal responsibility to mimic addressing an educational concern that should have been covered by the parents but had been repeatedly overlooked. Once this matter was dealt with, it cured the boy of his festering sore and the quasi-compulsive behavior that had accompanied it. The child's spelling improved and the family's situation had found its new equilibrium.



## Chapter 6, Part 2

### Chapter 6, Part 2 Summary and Analysis

The next case was about how the therapist helped a mother to re-establish her authority with her son. The psychiatrist was involved only after an 8-year-old boy's behavioral problems seemed to be insurmountable. Erickson met both the mother and the son and then met with each one individually until a plan was devised. The boy has become a terror. The therapist prescribes a specific course of action. With his direction and his assurance that her son is not being put in danger from doing so, the mother spends an entire day sitting on her son.

So far, it has been shown that Erickson makes unique arrangements with each of his clients. A great part of the therapist's role is to supply needed control over one or more people in a temporary manner to facilitate a cure or other effective treatment of a problem. Hypnosis is often an integral part of the treatment plan. Erickson restricts himself to the truth, which Haley points out as a means that distinguishes him from those seeking to be manipulative rather than those who are forthright and have an interest in the welfare of the client. Erickson's use of hypnosis is shown through these case studies to be highly effective. However, whether or not readers are at all comfortable with it, Erickson includes suggestions for amnesia to his patients. The suggestion is that he does this to protect the over all well being of the mind of the patient. The case studies show that there do not seem to be any detrimental affects of his doing so. Erickson is shown to do this for the purpose of controlling and minimizing emotional disturbance in the individual patient.

Part of Erickson's method is to not uniformly side with the same family member. This is described as being on the service of truth and unity even though it may sound artificial. He does this consistently as a rule of thumb. In the case where the husband has threatened to kill his wife unless she gives birth to a child of the gender he wants, Erickson recommends divorce. The husband is an attorney in this case and should be above the uncivilized type of man that would behave in such a way. Erickson treats his behavior as having fallen beneath a civilized standard and suggests to the man that he should have a re-think. Erickson admits to having no knowledge of how to pre-determine baby gender. The Chinese have this knowledge and readers can find it in English online.



# Chapter 7, Marriage and Family Dilemmas

## Chapter 7, Marriage and Family Dilemmas Summary and Analysis

This chapter opens with a continuation of the brief review of what has been shown about the psychiatrist Milton Erickson's methodology begun in the previous chapter. Erickson would combine acceptance of the patient's condition upon entering treatment with hypnosis and non-hypnotic modes of intervention. His preference was for brief therapy treatments, often not more than a few weeks of sessions. There were cases where he worked long term with the same individual. When he did, there would be rather short periods when the patient would have more frequent appointments and then they might go for quite a while without having a meeting of any kind. Erickson also allowed previous patients to visit him of their own accord, on a social level, as part of informal follow ups. This shows that Erickson did make a kind of personal commitment to the therapy relationship. Erickson also gave patients and the relatives that were most involved with them specific instructions in some cases. These were often vital to the successful treatment of the patient and were successful. Erickson recognized that normally the problem was indicative not only of a trouble with the patient but also in social conditions and other influences - be it in-laws or cultural biases, and that the matter must be treated holistically for genuine healing to occur.

This chapter continues to consist of case studies, this time about marriage. Haley reports that power struggles about who is dominant in a marriage are quite normal during the early years of one. In extreme cases, couples may find relief when they go to a therapist. The therapist's intent is to be sympathetic to the marriage and to each of the partners in it. The chapter includes examples of when one partner's controlling behavior has disturbed the sexual life of the couple and goes on to show how much of it can be remedied when difficulties in other parts of the relationship are effectively addressed. In some cases, one of the partners does not realize how severely troubled some aspect of the relationship is, but it is quite obvious to the therapist. Attendance at therapy permits Erickson to instruct the couple through an intervention how to enable them to make needed changes. Here, enable is used like empowerment rather than with the negative connotations with which it has been associated. Erickson would also evaluate the situation in an effort to determine who might need to do what, in order for the needed changes to occur. In some cases, the patients must learn to disagree using new methods; there are instances where the fighting is left to run its natural course, but other cases where something definitely needs to change, and the therapist can help this change to occur by breaking up the old pattern without destroying the whole marriage.



# Chapter 7, Marriage & Family Dilemmas

## Chapter 7, Marriage & Family Dilemmas Summary and Analysis

Erickson has specific ideas about the use of mood stabilizers and tranquilizers. This is in part because he feels that when the circumstances need to be changed, it is wrong to prevent healthy growth by substituting sedatives for good therapy. Solving problems associated with alcohol, prescription tranquilizer, and illegal drug use are all included in this chapter. Normally, the problem extends beyond the substance abuser and what is needed is actually a change of habituated behavior. He cites examples of a couple that ceased to have an alcohol problem when they bought a trailer and took up camping on the weekends. The successful outcome seems bizarre without knowledge of the therapeutic intervention by Erickson and his staff.

This chapter begins with discussion of a marriage that has lasted a number of years and quite possibly some children are involved. As this book is about therapy, the types of marriages referred to are those in which some longstanding marital problem finally is confronted. This confrontation manifests by the couple going to therapy. Erickson has already explained his views on individual and family therapy. In cases where only the wife comes in he has often implies that he is having some kind of relationship with his wife, therefore triangulating the relationship. He also uses his own masculinity and knowledge of men to facilitate the husband's willingness to meet the therapist and to experience some therapy. Erickson is content if a husband goes so far as to show up so as to set the therapist straight on some ways that the therapist has been wrong. Knowledge of his inaccurate perceptions of the husband has been intentionally sent home through the wife. Erickson's initial behavior normally then leads to effective therapy: he would use his position to effect a beneficial intervention that leaves the couple reoriented into their new and improved dynamic and empowered them to go back to leaving out the therapist. Erickson notes that long-term therapy of only one partner in a marriage makes the marriage unnatural in that it disrupts the natural flow of events. As in other types of cases, the purpose of the therapeutic intervention is to provide some third-party objectivity regarding the entire situation. If one spouse does something that the other one really can't stand, or both need to do something a bit differently, but for some reason both are stuck in their own routines, then Erickson will figure that out and help them by planning a short set of events that change their dynamic. The chapters of subheadings in this chapter are but one: "Interviewing the Family as a Group."



# Chapter 8, Weaning Parents from Children

## Chapter 8, Weaning Parents from Children Summary and Analysis

Haley begins this chapter by explaining that the way therapy is conducted has progressed in a leap. Erickson signifies the change from recognizing that problems within a family are just that. Individuals who exhibit symptoms and are the one to turn up at a therapist, or in severe cases, to be institutionalized are typically not the entire or actual problem. The 19th-century method was simply to treat a patient on an individual basis. The therapists noticed that there was something else going on; here Mesmer and Freud are used as examples, in cases where one or more parents would interfere or remove the patient from therapy once improvements were effected. Erickson in the 20th century insists on addressing the actual problem and asserts the right to include other individuals who are part of the trouble. Erickson goes one step further to assure success: he facilitates the transformations that the group must undergo for the solution or resolution of a problem to last. One example is a case where a teenager is institutionalized because she relates the fact that her mother has been having an affair with a local wealthy man. The family is so displeased with the revelation that they have her locked up instead of changing the whole dynamic another way so they can deal with what the teen knows.

The challenge in this chapter is how a family comes to terms with its members growing up and leaving home. Great dramas are enacted when the dynamic between the parents has grown dependent in any way on their relationships with the offspring. Other problems in the family can put peculiar pressures on any given member. Children maturing and leaving the nest is an intense transition for the parents and for the offspring. In some cases, the reactions are so extreme that therapy is necessary. One extreme example here is when a young woman goes off to college and her parents build an addition to the house so she can live there while she is an adult, including after marriage. If she had wanted this, it might have been great; the trouble was that the parents did this to her even though she did not want it. The daughter was so distressed and feeling so ineffectual that therapy became necessary. Erickson was able to intervene successfully, and the daughter and parents were able to communicate and make the necessary compromises. The parents rented out the addition and revisited the therapist when that daughter became a mother. They weren't sure how often they should visit.





## Chapter 13, Chapter 8 - Part 2

### Chapter 13, Chapter 8 - Part 2 Summary and Analysis

Erickson treats the entire problem, rather than permanently labeling any individual in the family as the problem. Here, Erickson had to work with the parents on their dynamic, including extreme sexual tensions, while at the same time serving as the daughter's therapist. The parents were so competitive about this, that one of the parents had spent a week in the same town where the daughter lives for the sole purpose of helping the daughter get to therapy. That person then has to prevent the mother from removing the girl from the therapeutic relationship. The girl's body image needed improvement, and she needed to lose a lot of weight. The therapist worked to encourage the girl to voice her criticisms of her mother and re-work her perception of her father's behaviors, which included some incorrect perceptions regarding the parents' sexual difficulties and whether or not the father sexually included another woman. The case study concludes showing this young woman succeeds in marrying but not without a conflict about whether or not to invite her mother to the wedding; she does invite them all, but also follows the therapist's instructions to for the daughter to insist upon respectful behavior from the mother as the condition for the presence.

For some parents the transition from being a parent into being a grandparent actually makes it easier for over involved parents to let go of their own offspring. People may or may not recognize that they need to be weaned off their own children. After years of intense involvement, the healthiest way to do this for all involved is sought. One case shows how bad it can get. Erickson accepted a client, a young woman who was living with her parents at an age when many other people's children had left home. She had been in a car accident and after recovering had undergone months of extensive therapy. The truth was that the therapist could not get anywhere with her; the other therapist was not even able to apply hypnosis that would actually alleviate the young woman's chronic pain. Erickson was able to make tremendous progress with this same hopeless case. What it really was, was that her parents had a very tough time adjusting to their children's growing up. Erickson keyed into this when after much probing, he learned that an elder sister had left home, married against the parents' wishes and was now going to have a baby. This is also perfectly normal adult behavior but the other daughter expressed the situation in the language of a disobedient adolescent rather than the behavior of a full grown woman. He found out what the young woman wanted and made a few recommendations. He also gave the mother short term therapy and addressed the behavior of both daughters. There are no subheadings in this chapter either.





# Chapter 9, The Pain of Old Age

## Chapter 9, The Pain of Old Age Summary and Analysis

This chapter addresses those challenges most closely associated with the last phase of life. The manner in which people face old age depends in part upon themselves but is also influenced by the attitudes of others towards the aged. For those who glorify youth culture, older years may have a more difficult psychological impact. However, for people who have a healthy and integrated sense of every stage of life, are surrounded by friends, and well enough funded, this final phase of life can be quite pleasurable and goes on for decades.

The use of hypnosis is used in this chapter to alleviate pain. This is also the first chapter in which Haley shows how others misused techniques that Erickson had used properly. Erickson relieves a severely-injured old man of pain but further enables him to recover greatly from a stroke. This man is first roused from nearly a full year in bed by being verbally tormented by his therapist. Erickson is able to provoke the man into proving to himself and the others that he can in fact get up and is even able to make it to the car. His wife, and he is lucky because he has a loyal wife, helps him. The book ends with the wife contacting Erickson after a decade, with a request for a new set of therapeutic treatments. Erickson gently refuses to do this, claiming that even though it worked before, her husband is probably too old for his therapy to be effective. This also shows that Erickson does not accept clients he does not think he can help.

This entire book is written quite clearly. The publication is imperfect; readers may notice typographical errors. They are few enough and minor enough that they do not thwart readers from being able to completely understand what has been written. Jay Haley is obviously an advocate of Erickson and his therapeutic methods. The use of case studies to display the psychiatrist's efforts and means is typical of this branch of science. The arrangement of the works has been modified so that it is more palatable to readers who are involved for the purposes of pleasure reader rather than professional.



# Characters

## Milton Erickson

This is the subject of the majority of the book. He is no longer living but was still alive during the 1980s. He comes from the American Midwest and received the majority of his education and preliminary work experience in Wisconsin and Colorado. Only after having served as hospital staff, possibly during a residency, which is standard practice for physician-training and development, did he move to the Northeast. He served society through his work in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

He left a number of papers. Many of these have been assembled and presented in the form of a book by Jay Hayley entitled "Advanced Techniques of Hypnosis and Therapy."

This psychiatrist made major advances in the field of psychiatry. He applied therapy to a whole situation. This means that rather than focusing exclusively upon any one individual Milton Erickson's therapy was part of a more recent development: that of expanding the context of any given problem or symptom to include not only the individual presenting the specific symptom, but also the most prominent family members or those with whom the person spends the bulk of his or her time.

The manner in which Erickson applied his therapy is discussed in this book. Erickson was firmly committed to his therapeutic efforts to improve mental health care in America in the twentieth century. He has made his mark on the field: all those who have been helped by him and their families are in fact quite grateful.

## Jay Haley

Jay Haley is the author of this book. He is very clearly a fan of Milton Erickson's. His success in creating this book and getting it published is cited on the back cover. Jay Haley is cited as having done modern psychiatry a great service by spreading news of Milton Erickson's strategic therapy. He is further hailed as having presented a clear rendition of the psychiatrist's work that can be used by professionals and general readers alike.

Haley is American and is younger than Erickson. In the Preface he explains that in the first edition of the book, Erickson was still alive but was aging and died in 1980. Jay writes with the implicit assumption that he is well versed in the field of psychology as well as being a writer. He was part of the group of people who helped bring Milton Erickson's work to fame.



## **Interviewer**

This is the only name used to indicate one speaker during several pages of text in chapter 3. The Interviewer is in dialogue with Erickson. Haley explains that the Interviewer was a young man who was attending a meeting in which therapy methods were discussed. The Interviewer asks questions that are targeted to body-image and how to improve or fix situations. The problems being addressed are mainly those relevant to young women.

## **Mesmer**

This is the name of a nineteenth-century psychologist. He was eminent and his work has become known as Mesmerism. He is mentioned at various times during the course of the entire book. He is viewed as one of Erickson's important predecessors. He is most significant for his ability as a hypnotist and for having shown how hypnosis can be used as a form of therapy to reduce or eliminate some unwanted symptoms in individual patients.

## **A blonde**

This description is used by a young woman patient when the therapist seeks to learn about the body image of the patient. He questions her more extensively about what this term means. This occurs in chapter 3, during the excerpted dialogue that Haley has included in the book. This statement is part of the woman's self-image.

## **Harold the feeble-minded**

Being feeble minded is part of the horrific self-image that another one of Erickson's patients had. This patient was a young man, and the statement used is indicative of the negative messages he had received and had been taught to use to describe himself. Erickson worked with this young man long enough to find out that that self-description was actually false. This man's name is actually Harold, and his case is mentioned in chapter 4, "Character Revision of the Young Adult."

## **Joe**

This is another of Erickson's patients who are used as examples in the book. His case is covered in chapter 6, "Childbirth and Rearing of the Young." At the time that he was Erickson's patient he was an extremely difficult 8-year-old boy. The bottom line of his trouble was that he was overcome by anxieties associated with not having a leader. He had developed the belief that his mother would not or could not control him anymore and had turned to rampaging his entire neighborhood. Distraught, his parents had managed to bring him to Erickson. Erickson actually had the mother sit on her son for



about two days; he had to get her to overcome her fear that she would be abusing her son in her assertion of dominance through physical methods, and he had to get the boy to understand that his mother most certainly did still have the power to dominate him, including physically. The parents would not have taken this course of action had it not come as a directive from a health professional, Erickson the psychiatrist.

## **Robert**

This is one of Milton Erickson's children. He is the center of a piece of chapter 6: "Childbirth and Dealing with the Young." Robert suffers an injury at the age of 3, and his father and mother deal with this incident in a particular way. Milton Erickson shares what he tells his son, shouting out sympathetic comments and later progressing into how he and the wife tend to his injuries. He even puts the context of having to have stitches into a familial context by comparing how many stitches Robert will have to have compared to times his siblings have had stitches.

## **Ann**

This is the name of a female patient who was helped by Milton Erickson when she was a young woman. She was under 5 feet tall but weighed well over 100 pounds. This was a case where the young lady is in dreadful condition when she comes in for therapy. Most of the therapy is simply about her getting confidence, learning to wear make-up and about typical female grooming and weight loss. This leads to her getting married. There is a brief follow up, showing that 15 years later, she was still married to that man.

## **Herbert**

This man was an exceptionally difficult case. When Erickson meets him he has been hospitalized and is being force fed through tubes. Herbert denies that he even has a stomach. Erickson works with him, and in standard form, assures Herbert, that is going to allow Herbert to re-evaluate conditions for himself. Over time, he gets Herbert to perform work, to exercise, and exposes him to high quality food so Herbert resumes eating and will admit that he has a stomach.

## **Bill**

This is another child patient. Bill's real trouble was that he needed to attend to a remedial difficulty related to his schooling, and he needed his parents help. They kept overlooking the problem, and he was avoiding taking care of it himself but it had caused him to develop a sore and then to pick at it for over a year. The parents were so concerned by this symptom that they brought him to Erickson. The psychiatrist figured out what it was. Erickson also conferred with the parents and gave them a few directives. He had the father take over the boy's other chores, and the boy spent the time doing his remedial work for school. The therapist took on the role of teacher in that

he inspected the boy's school work. Meanwhile, the parents worked on some issue that really was between the two of them that had been showing through what was going on with their child.



# Objects/Places

## Therapist's Office

This is a location that is referred to frequently in the book as the background environment of events. Erickson's office is never described in great detail. Readers are informed that it has two chairs on the patient side of the desk. There is a desk and a chair that are his; the desk has drawers which are referred to in at least one case. He refers to the door of his office in at least one excerpt, as a patient is intentionally seated near the door. In other cases, when Erickson intentionally lured in a patient, two chairs are used on the client side of the desk so he can hypnotize one actively and subtly influence the other at the same time.

Many of the case studies contained in the book include information about events that take place outside the therapist's office. At the same time, in all but two cases presented in the book, the patient comes to the therapist's office making it the background for the hypnotic and interactive speaking part of the therapy.

## Hypnotic device

Hypnosis has traditionally been associated with some object, such as a light, or a key chain. Haley explains that while these could be used and have been used, Milton Erickson did not use a specific hypnotic device other than himself. Hypnosis is defined in this book as a means of communicating between two people. Erickson is able to obtain cooperation from his clients especially because he has the right intentions and is honest, but also because he actually has learned to even use their resistance as a means to eliciting their cooperation. This is part of the set of behaviors that constitute his "hypnotic device."

## Wisconsin

This American state is the place where Milton Erickson did his preliminary studies as a university student. It is a large, Western state. Wisconsin is part of the Northern Midwest. It is only referred to in the Preface as the author provides a little background about Milton Erickson before espousing his work as a psychiatrist.

## Colorado

This Midwestern state is South of Wisconsin. Like the latter, it is only mentioned during the Preface of the book. The reason for this is that Milton Erickson did his residency work in a hospital in Colorado at the very beginning of his career.



## America

Throughout this book, this term is used as an alternative to the United States of America. This nation is the cultural backdrop for the cases presented by the author. The one main cultural exception is noted, and the cultural difference is one factor used by the therapist to achieve healing. Erickson is only able to do so because he has knowledge of some of the particular quirks of the Prussians.

## bedroom

This is a psychological context for much of the therapy. The reason for this is that there are a few cases involving sexual issues and problems that have emerged either shortly after marriage or as being a difficult area for a would-be bride. Erickson conducts therapy for the bedroom at the office. Methods that he uses to maintain appropriate boundaries with young women clients are specifically discussed by Jay Haley. As such, the bedroom is an important location for a number of the clients whose cases are partially presented in the book.

## Checks

These come up in relation to a case where a woman patient is noted as having signed her husband's name on some checks. Erickson calls this forgery, and cites her husband as having been patient because he did cover the checks. There is no description of whether or not these were her husband's checks. Many couples who share money share the use of the husband's signature without calling it forgery at all. Erickson does not give any details about whether or not the couple had agreed to her direct access to his money as her own as part and parcel of their marriage.

Checks are mentioned in a few other rare instances during other cases.

## Tranquilizers

These are mentioned in a number of cases, especially in the second half of the book. The author clarifies that Erickson was able to successfully treat a number of people who had developed substance abuse problems and dependencies as part of family therapy. Erickson did not distribute prescription tranquilizers. In cases where another physician would give a prescription for tranquilizers, Erickson would use hypnosis and if need be, would include amnesia to help the patient cope or avoid being overwhelmed by bad feelings.

As with other individual symptoms and troubles, Erickson would often use therapeutic interventions to reorient other members of the family. By doing so, the entire dynamic was able to be altered so that when the patient was released from the addiction or heavy use of tranquilizers the entire family could handle the associated changes.



## **Recorded Music**

Here, recorded music comes up predominantly in one case during the chapter called "Character Revision of the Young Adult." A young man who had no experience romancing women, and a deep fear and hostility towards females and who had practiced homosexuality was slowly and gently urged into circumstances which could alleviate his distress about women. After having had a successful, nonsexual relationship with a woman, an older woman, the patient had a set of experiences with an older woman who was one of his neighbors.

## **Polka dotted dress**

This is an dreadful piece of attire that one of Erickson's patients wore. It took a great deal of therapy to get the woman to feel she could alter her clothing selection. This patient had been very badly treated by others, especially family members for many years before she ever made it into therapy.

## **Suggestions**

In this book, suggestions have a special meaning. Here they are indicated as being constructive comments intentionally made by the therapist Milton Erickson. He makes certain of these during hypnosis. They are often formulated as directives. "Hypnotic suggestion" has a special role in this book. The term suggestion is used in every chapter.





# Themes

## Hypnosis

Haley makes it very clear that Erickson used hypnosis as a vital and integral part of his therapeutic system for patients. He comes from a line of hypnotists within the field of psychology. This was his intellectual heritage, not his familial heritage. Haley provides readers with a special definition of hypnosis in this book. He writes that it is a type of interpersonal communication. Strangely enough, hypnosis is somehow both clearly evidenced and yet left rather vague for readers.

More than once, Erickson simply tells a patient to go into a trance. There is no description anywhere by even one client regarding what this was like or how to comply with it. Even so, it was shown clearly that there was ample evidence of trance states in patients. One sign of the patient being in a trance is that he or she became much more open to suggestion. During these times, Erickson would work with what he learned from the patient while under hypnosis.

Erickson was actually quite sensitive to the patients' emotional states. While he did not delve into the causes of their troubles and sought simply to help patients overcome or let go of the problem, he would strive to soothe them when working with sensitive material. Once he had done this, or in cases where the client was obviously disturbed about something, he would simply implant suggestions that would help move the patient towards making improvements. Then, he would endeavor to help the patient have calmer emotions when aroused from the trance.

One of the most controversial aspects of Erickson's therapeutic methods is that he intentionally caused hypnotically-induced amnesia in his patients. He did this to alleviate their emotional distress. This follows nature's way to some degree. Research has shown that particularly in the event of a trauma, individuals sometimes experience forms of partial amnesia. Erickson used amnesia as part of hypnosis in a similar manner. Much of that research has taken place after Erickson's work. Erickson used partial amnesia to help patients preserve a sense of personal privacy when what was discussed during the trance state may have been deeply personal and extremely sensitive. The amelioration of upset feelings has obvious therapeutic value, although there are definite problems associated with making people forget things, especially if part of what they really need or want to know has been buried or made inaccessible by virtue of the protective amnesia.

## Family Therapy

This is another important theme in the book. Family therapy has undergone a number of changes over the course of history. During the book, the specter of injustice is revealed. During the nineteenth century, therapists tended to treat individuals. When there were



symptoms, one person would be brought in for therapy. Often therapy would help, and the person would improve. Therapists also noticed that all too often when a patient did show evidence of great improvement, other members of the family would take the person out of therapy when the work wasn't yet completed. In the most extreme cases, an individual would be removed from the life of the family and most of the social situations by being institutionalized, as was also frequently done to the handicapped.

Erickson and Haley do not avoid the painful reality that a family member could end up locked up because of a difference of values - one person was not a racist, for example, in a family that was. The example in the book is the case of a young woman who was apparently hospitalized by the rest of the family because she expressed the well known fact that her mother was simultaneously married and having an ongoing affair with a local wealthy man. The affair was common knowledge but something about how the one family member related to it, had created some kind of major problem for the others.

As a consequence, the entire field of psychiatry shifted so that family therapy extends beyond any one individual family member. Now, if someone is brought into therapy, Erickson would endeavor to make sure that the family dynamic could handle the adjustments that healing would involve. This is important, particularly since Erickson and others often found that there was a reciprocal relationship between family members, especially with elderly couples. One might be unwell, which would help the other to feel better because of being so needed and so useful; however, the other one had the official problem. Then, when that one healed, the other one, who now felt less needed often became saddened. When such a couple made it into therapy, in a successful intervention, the couple would actually heal from the difficulties caused by their stage in life, and they would rediscover how to function without needing either one of them to have some serious problem in order to make it so they would. Often, Erickson was among those who figured out that if someone quit getting drunk too often, or there was some other major change - even if it was that one spouse ceased to have extramarital affairs, then the entire family dynamic would change. Under these conditions, family therapy would provide a third party intervention that would facilitate the entire family's progress into a new stable situation with a new dynamic.

## Control

Therapy is typically initiated when someone has a strong desire to gain control in a set of circumstances. The patients are often but not always the one who actively seeks the therapy. Normally, there is something about the patient's life that is problematic and possibly out of control. The therapist views himself as providing intervention. In fact, this is the terminology specifically used throughout the book, "therapeutic interventions."

Often, the patient's own thinking is obviously part of the problem. Erickson used the condition of the patient upon entering treatment as a means to finding the solutions, or at the very least, as the first steps towards the real cure. The cure, once enacted, was typically a more successful life, often one that included marriage and children. Haley goes into details at various points during the book in which it is shown how Erickson



would use the mental conditions of a patient to make inroads towards being able to help the patient. This often included being quite unpleasant, at least initially. There were two main reasons for this. One was that by corroborating what the patient had grown accustomed to thinking about himself or herself, Erickson set himself for being able to hypnotize that client. The other reason was to establish trust between the two of them. Any patient could tell that only if Erickson would not lie to him or her could the therapist be trusted to hypnotize and further assist the patient.

The therapist's role was very often to take control of the patient and often also some of the relatives. Hypnotism was specifically for the purpose of controlling the patient in a way that would lead to the improved condition of the client where other ideas had inhibited or obstructed him or her in the past. The therapist also intervened by controlling other members of the patient's family.

Erickson would instruct parents to treat their child in a certain way in order to move his therapy goals forward. He would have an adult patient distance himself or herself from another troublesome relative. He would tell a couple to behave a certain way and to follow a set of his directions. The therapist would do these things benevolently - meaning, that they were to help the individual and the relatives to proceed to transform their interconnected dynamics in a specific way.

When the therapy was successful, the therapist only had control of the patient temporarily and mainly for the purposes of restoring or improving the level of control available to the client over his or her own circumstances. Relationships with others were designed to be for the betterment of everyone, and therefore therapeutic interventions were intended to improve the manner in which family members related to one another. Interventions helped the people in a family to change old patterns of behavior; there were many cases where the behavioral pattern was decades old and terribly entrenched.



# Style

## Perspective

The perspective of the author is that of a twentieth-century man. A small number of his personal biases are evident. One of these is that he is a strong supporter of Milton Erickson and his work. He clearly advocates the scientific worldview, given the state of sciences in the twentieth century. He shows that he supports the idea of progress, particularly in the areas of science - the methodology of the empirical sciences is the means to increased knowledge and improved perception of the truth. He believes in the continuing development of psychology. He believes that the work of Milton Erickson is part of the latest developments of the field of psychology.

Haley explains in the book that there are two entirely different attitudes towards the unconscious mind taken by psychologists. One warns that the unconscious is full of dangerous forces; the other assures people that the real unconscious mind harbors wonderful energies and memories. Hypnotists are one strain of psychology, represented by figures such as Mesmer. These are the people who had a greater tendency to think that the subconscious or unconscious mind is beneficial; whereas, Freudians tended to view it as harmful.

When Erickson uses hypnosis as part of his therapeutic treatment, he involves this unconscious region of the mind in its own healing; he helps to release his patients from their troubles which may have in part been induced by the negative suggestions of others. In most cases of miserable, underachieving patients they had been the victims of repeated mental and emotional attacks from others in which they were belittled or otherwise given numerous negative suggestions. Rather than blaming the unconscious mind, Erickson simply applies strong doses of psychological counter measures and involves his patients in their own correctives. When he does this he is involved with both the faith in the good within the unconscious and also the bad.

The remainder of the perspective is the relatively normative approach to twentieth century American life. Here, most problems and challenges are viewed as having their context. The author and Milton Erickson both treated family issues as taking place within the context of the family rather than viewing the patient's difficulties in isolation from the dynamics in the rest of the family. The solutions tended to be interpersonal and the bulk of therapy was directed towards empowering patients to make needed changes that would resolve their troubles.

## Tone

The tone of the work is engaging and informative. It is objective and interpersonal. It is not meant to do anything except to impart the truth in a way that makes it so readers will see that Milton Erickson is a wonderful therapist and to convince readers that the kind of



approach he takes to individual and family therapy should be used extensively throughout our society. In this sense, the tone is biased and persuasive.

The author's writing is quite clear. Thanks to this, it is accessible to the readers. It can be appreciated and used by lay folk and it can also be used to further educate professionals in the field of psychology. One of the author's main claims is that the therapeutic method Erickson is using is interpersonal. In fact, hypnosis is defined as a type of interpersonal communication between the therapist and the patient.

The tone is to nurture the public use of Erickson's techniques. Those techniques can be viewed in isolation, and the work can be interpreted simply as a way of espousing Erickson's greatness as an individual. Realistically, Jay Haley is advocating the furtherance of these practices, as modeled by Erickson. This is done in the hope of improving the quality of family therapy and to give hope to people.

Hope, in fact, is also an element of the tone of the work. The reason for this is that the author intends to give hope to other therapists and patients that they can resolve their difficulties should they be so severe as to warrant therapeutic interventions.

## Structure

The book is quite straightforward in its structure. It is set out in chronological order, progressing through the normal human life cycle. The first step sets out Erickson's therapeutic methods themselves. The rest of the book shows how these are applied in direct relation to the phase of life of the individual or family seeking treatment. This is done through a combination of exposition by the author himself and extensive use of Milton Erickson's notes regarding cases.

The book relies upon case studies as examples. These are the norm in the field of psychiatry, and for this reason, this book can be used as a supplemental work for a higher education course in the subject. The language used is clear enough for the typical high school student to be able to understand it.

Readers can clearly see that the book and the client's individual troubles are not their own. At the same time, especially couched into the language of human development, it is very easy for readers to be able to relate to both the client and the patients.

The text includes the author's setting out major ideas and then using Erickson's information within the body of the book. These are not in set as quotations in the sense of being surrounded by quotation marks. However, the author makes it quite plain when he is switching over to including a section of Erickson's own writings; often these are multiple pages.



## Quotes

"After that seminar my research investigation included the communicative aspects of the hypnotic relationship" (p. 10).

"But a few words about Dr. Erickson's professional background may be useful. He attended the University of Wisconsin and received his medical degree at the Colorado General Hospital, simultaneously receiving his Master's degree in psychology," (p. 11).

"Erickson can be considered the master in the strategic approach to therapy. He has long been known as the leading medical hypnotist, having spent his life doing experimental work and using hypnosis in therapy in an infinite variety of ways," (p. 18).

"One way to view the strategic therapy is as a logical extension of hypnotic technique," (p. 19).

"As the word 'hypnosis' is used here it refers to a type of communication between people," (p. 20).

"The hypnotist directs another individual to spontaneously change his behavior," (p. 21).

"A therapist prefers that a patient initiate new behavior himself and choose his own direction in life," (p. 25).

"Erickson works in metaphor not only in his therapeutic maneuvers but even in the way he gathers information," (p. 29).

"At the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of the 'unconscious' appears to have branched into two different streams. Sigmund Freud emphasized that the unconscious was composed of unsavory forces attempting to break through into consciousness...The other stream was composed largely of hypnotists, who emphasized that the unconscious was a positive force," (p. 33).

"However, when he enters a family system, his input might be directed towards various parts of the family, with careful control of how new information is to be distributed among the members.

[paragraph change] Since this approach is different from that of most family therapists, one can wonder about its origins," (p. 36).

"As psychiatry became more interpersonal, the focus of therapy shifted slightly," (p. 38).

"Symptoms appear when there is dislocation or interruption in the unfolding life cycle of a family or other natural group," (p. 42).

"Symptoms usually appear when a person is in an impossible situation and is trying to break out of it," (p. 44).



"Although the symbolic act of marriage has a different meaning for everyone, it is primarily an agreement that the young people are committed to each other for life," (p. 50).

"The decisions the newly married pair make cannot be easily separated from parental influence," (p. 51).

"During the course of this trance, I gave suggestions to the roommate in such a way that by imperceptible degrees they were accepted by the patient as applying to herself," (p. 76).

"Shortly after this procedure was begun, the patient responded by a show of interest and with every outward manifestation of insight and understanding," (p. 81).

"First I asked her if she really wanted therapy," (p. 102).

"They can't miss the issue of intellectual awareness-I wonder if you really know," (p. 103).

"...but my mother looked up my husband's pedigree before she consented to the marriage. She planned a very elaborate wedding and was outraged when my husband and I eloped. I knew I couldn't stand the kind of social affair my mother would make out of the wedding," (p. 180).



## Topics for Discussion

What indicates that a patient is actually in a hypnotic trance?

What makes Milton Erickson's therapy so distinctive and innovative? [within the context of psychology]

List the natural stages of life as described in this work.

Describe the difference between individual-centered therapy and problem-centered family therapy.

What are the benefits and problems that can be solved and created by using hospitalization as a means of attaining much needed therapeutic attention for an individual who may represent a family's problem ?

Does Erickson think everyone should marry? Write out at least two implications of marriage with children and of not marrying - with or without children.

What do you most like about Erickson's therapeutic techniques?

Give one criticism of Erickson's therapeutic practices.