



Milton H. Erickson

The Most Influential Hypnotherapist of Our Time

By Dianne Knight, B.A.

Dr. Milton H. Erickson, M.D. (1902-1980), showed people to use their own resources and solve their own problems under his guidance. He taught people to use experiences and inner processes in

order to live more fully, to view the past with perspective, to explore the potential in the present, and to anticipate the future more positively. Erickson's theories can enrich our lives with altered states that provide new approaches to controlling pain, handling trauma, and relieving stress.

In 1977 he was awarded the Benjamin Franklin Gold Medal by the International Society of Hypnosis, and a special issue of *The American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis* was published to commemorate his 75th birthday, including a special tribute written by Margaret Mead.

From the accounts of family members who were with him in his last hours, "it appears probable that he died as he had often said he wanted to - with a smile on his face, surrounded by friends and family" writes Sidney Rosen, M.D., in his Editor's Note to *My Voice Will Go With You: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson*. Rosen continues, "Four people spoke at the service, - Jeffrey Zeig, Robert Pearson, Kay Thompson, and Earnest Rossi. I recall Pearson's final comment: "Erickson took on the psychiatric establishment single-handedly, and he beat them. They don't know it yet. Also at the service, Rossi recited the dream in song and verse that had awakened him in tears just before he had received the phone call from Phoenix, with the news of Erickson's death."

Milton Erickson's teaching tales, one of the major elements in his therapy, are extraordinary examples of

the art of persuasion. Erickson weaves into his tales reminiscences, personal biography, odd thoughts, or unusual facts. Sidney Rosen, a gifted practitioner of Ericksonian techniques, quotes a teaching tale, in his collection of Erickson's teaching tales, "And I want you to choose some time in the past when you were a very, very little girl. And my voice will go with you. And my voice will change into that of your parents, your neighbours, your friends, your schoolmates, your playmates, your teachers. And I want you to find yourself sitting in the school room, a little girl feeling happy about something, something that happened a long time ago, that you forgot a long time ago."

The source of Erickson's genius is his own blood and suffering; his therapeutic originality evolved out of life and death efforts to cope with his own congenital deficiencies and crippling physical illnesses. His patients could sense that Erickson's therapeutic skill came from genuine personal experience and knowledge. Through healing himself, he had learned how to heal others. We are all wounded in one way or another, and the same is true for all of us with a true calling to the healing professions.

***Dianne Knight achieved
Trainers' Track with Cheatwood
Research Institute in 1991.
New Life Patterns consultations with
Dianne may be booked by calling
Landline 416-551-7259***