

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Clinical Lecture Series

Evidence-based clinical hypnosis for  
clients and ourselves

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Monday, March 25, 2013  
UNC School of Social Work

The Blind Men and the Elephant  
John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)



The Blind Men and the Elephant

It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant  
Is very like a WALL!"

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,  
Cried, "Ho, what have we here,  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a SPEAR!"

The *Third* approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up and spake:  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a SNAKE!"

The Blind Men and the Elephant (cont.)

The *Fourth* reached out an eager hand,  
And felt about the knee  
"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he:  
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a TREE!"

The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the ear,  
Said: "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a FAN!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope,  
Than seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a ROPE!"

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

Affirmations

- I am likeable and loveable.
- I am just as likeable and loveable as every other baby ever born.
- The more I love myself, the more love I have to give to others.
- It's OK to ask for what I want.
- After I've done everything that can be done about \_\_\_\_\_ then it's time to do something else, preferably something fun.
- I'm learning to like and love myself as my own best friend.
- I can learn very useful information from my mistakes.
- I don't have to / It's not necessary to...
- In the long run, I can learn to do what makes me happy more often and stop doing what hurts me.
- I am learning to accept and forgive myself and others.

Treatment Principles

(Milton Erickson, MD)

1. People operate out of their internal maps and not out of sensory experience.
2. People make the best choice for themselves at any given moment.
3. The explanation, theory, or metaphor used to relate facts about a person is not the person.
4. Respect all messages from the client.
5. Teach choice; never attempt to take choice away.

### Treatment Principles, cont.

6. The resources the client needs lie within his or her own personal history.
7. Meet the client at his or her model of the world.
8. The person with the most flexibility or choice will be the controlling element in the system.
9. A person can't not communicate.
10. If it's hard work, reduce it down.
11. Outcomes are determined at the psychological level.

Source: Lankton and Lankton (1983)

### Notes to Help Recall the Presentation

- Definition – progressive narrowing of attention; turning inward; focus; concentration; creative imagination
- Common everyday trances
- Important facts:
  - Trance for Learning
  - All hypnosis is self-hypnosis
  - It's your dream, trance, memory, life. You can do what you want with it.
  - The medium is the message
  - The map is not the...

*“Practice makes Progress”*

### 3 Signals for Trance

Slow & deepen breathing before you start, then

1. One deep held breath 5-10 seconds, while you scan the body and relax anywhere that's tense or tight [ except. Gently hold the breath until you Exhale slowly, letting as much more unnecessary tension go. Wait 'til It breaths [not voluntary] and segue into slow, deep lower/bellying breathing, supported and regulated by diaphragm muscle.
2. “Now it's OK to go into a safe, comfortable learning trance”  
[learning can eventually be interchanged with another descriptive work like: creative, useful, calming, relieving, resource accessing...
3. See your Visual scene of comfort and pleasure, safety and security, in great detail. Then add: sounds, physical and emotional feelings, smells, tastes.

Deeping – step into your scene. Be there now, experiencing all your senses and images of: Train, steps, elevator, etc.

### Style

- Positive, possible, expectant, gentle, supportive
- Accepting, forgiving, compassionate; learning and unlearning
- Flexible, creative, curious, expectant; surprises

### Suggestions

Indirect and direct, gentle imagery; all senses, repetition.

1. It's OK to/not to
2. I'm learning to/Not to
3. I'm making progress toward...
4. It's not necessary to...
5. I don't have to...
6. I may be surprised..
7. Visualize future goals accomplished...
8. Personal symbol, mandala, reminder...

## Techniques

“Everything is simpler, clearer in a trance”

1. Re-parent your child-self
2. Internal conversation with between parts, or ages; or with people living or dead/ at any age
3. Change past, or dreams scenes to become as positive as you want
4. See/think/feel Child – self in negative scene while Adult self watches and learns; or visibly growing Child into Adult while realizing... or Adult I am intervenes appropriately ...
5. Dreams -change ‘em; program ‘em

## Resources

The two most respected hypnosis societies that offer training for credentialed professionals and graduate students, with their peer-reviewed journals.

- American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH)
- *The American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis* [www.asch.net](http://www.asch.net)

Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (SCEH) [www.sceh.us](http://www.sceh.us)  
*International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis* <http://ijceh.com>

Worth Exploring:

Good papers and CDs from a leading scientist/clinician who wrote the Encyclopedia Britannica entries for both depression and hypnosis.

Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D. [www.yapko.com](http://www.yapko.com)

Milton H. Erickson Foundation. Promotes and advances work of the clinician/ teacher often considered the father of modern hypnosis. Trains mental health professionals worldwide. [erickson-foundation.org](http://erickson-foundation.org)

## I. Light Trance

Haley, J. and Richeport-Haley, M. (DVD) Milton H. Erickson, M.D. *Explorer in Hypnosis and Therapy*. Crown House.

- An easy one-hour overview and commentary of Dr. Erickson's life by one of his best-known students, Jay Haley.

Haley, Jay. (1973). *Uncommon Therapy: The Psychiatric Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, M.D.*, New York: Norton, 1973.

- The best introduction to Milton Erickson's challenging life and immense contributions to psychotherapy.

Lynn, S.J. and Kirsch, I. (2006). *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis: An Evidence-Based Approach*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

- The definitive cognitive-behavioral view, by two eminent researchers; Lynn is a brilliant clinician and teacher.

Yapko, M. (1995). *Essentials of Hypnosis*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Video – *Rashomon*. (1950). Japanese (subtitled). Directed by Akira Kurosawa.

- Art house classic, won Academy Award for foreign film. Intense crime of passion, with twists unique in its time; intense puzzling demonstration of separate realities.

Rosen, S. (1982). *My Voice Will Go With You: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson*. New York: Norton. (paperback 1991).

- Short stories Dr. Erickson told clients and trainees, and relied on in his later years -- charming, powerful clinical instructions via indirect/metaphorical suggestion.

## II. Medium Trance

Yapko, M. (1994). *Suggestion of Abuse: True and False Memories of Childhood Sexual Trauma*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- The research and book that ended the mushrooming of false memories of abuse elicited by therapists unaware that they were leading entranced clients hypnotically to create “memories” without validity.

Yapko, M. (2011) *Mindfulness and Hypnosis*. New York: Norton.

- Clear explication of the interesting relationship between mindfulness and hypnosis.

## III. Deep Trance/Serious Study

Barber, J. (1996) *Hypnosis and Suggestion in the Treatment of Pain: A Clinical Guide*. New York: Norton.

Erickson, M.H., Rossi, E.L., and Rossi, S.I. (1976) *Hypnotic Realities: The Induction of Clinical Hypnosis and Forms of Indirect Suggestion*. New York: Irvington.

Extensive, exhaustive categorization of forms of indirect suggestion, and detailed annotation of two trance inductions by Dr. Erickson of Shelia Rossi, training her to experience and use clinical hypnosis.

Goleman, D. (1988) *The Meditative Mind: The Varieties of Meditative Experience*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.

Shows how the many best-known approaches to meditation, including insight and mindfulness, use different vocabulary to describe strikingly similar phenomena.

Yapko, M.D. (2003) *Trancework: An Introduction to the Practice of Clinical Hypnosis* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) New York, NY: Psychology Press.

The clearest presentation of clinically hypnotic technique – train with him when you can.