

*The Periodic Table of the Elements*

# The Essential Elements of Ericksonian Hypnosis

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## Utilization Approach to Hypnosis

<b>Id</b> Individualized	<b>Is</b> Inclusive	<b>P</b> Permissive	<b>It</b> Indistinct
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- Ericksonian hypnosis is most often called the "utilization approach" or "naturalistic hypnosis."
- There are core conceptual elements that distinguish it from other types of hypnotherapy.

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"I think true psychotherapy is knowing that each patient is an individual, unique and different."  
Erickson, 1980

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**Id**  
Individualized

### Individualized

- All treatment is tailored to the needs of the individual (i.e., no protocols, manuals, or scripts).
- Similar to spontaneous conversation, this hypnosis is automatic rather than scripted. Overly calculated speech leaves little room for unconscious insight.
- Intimacy is born of uniqueness (think of how distasteful a pickup line is). Ericksonian inductions are intimate and thus unique to the person and the moment.
- *"I just had a story come to mind that I will share..."*

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**Id**  
Individualized

### Phenomenological

- Work within the client's system of logic and first person perspective of the world.
- The client's subjective experience is favored over objective/textbook "facts."
- Success is relative to the client's personal goals & objectives
- *"Tell me what you want from your trance experience..." "...Yes, that is right..."*

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**Id**  
Individualized

### Suggest Singularity

- "I've treated many conditions, and I always invent a new treatment in accord with the individual personality." Erickson, 1980
- *"...we will solve this problem in a way that is right for you, in accord with your abilities."*
- *"...you can revisit your most powerful memories, memories of overcoming hardship, there you will find what you need."*

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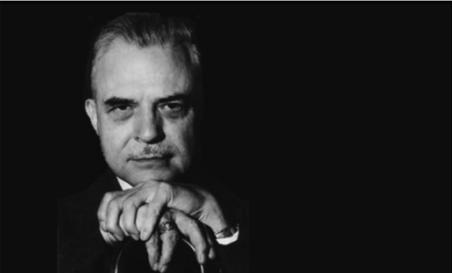
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"One of Milton's continuing admonitions was that students learn to use everything they saw and heard to enhance the induction. One can even use the resistances themselves."  
Zeig, 1994

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**Is**  
Inclusive

### Inclusive

- Like a good organic gardener, the therapist uses everything the patient brings.
- "Inclusive" is the acceptance of all parts as important contributory elements (opposite of divisiveness or neuroticism)
- Utilize existing behavior as part of the treatment strategy, always support the client's efforts to cope.
- During hypnosis, include spontaneous reactions into your plans. If the eyes remain open, do "eyes-open" hypnosis. If the patient starts to snore, suggest dream therapeutic dreams.

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**Is**  
Inclusive

### Process vs. Content

- When hypnosis is process-oriented, rather than technique oriented, any response the client makes is the correct response.
- Process-oriented suggestions pose general possibilities, but include little or no detail, leaving more space for the client's emerging experience.
- *"You can return to a meaningful event...see how it informs your current situation."*

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### Cover All Possibilities

- *“You will have your own way of experiencing hypnosis, which may include an awareness of being in trance, or a conscious certainty that you were never in trance.”*
- *“While learning to be symptom free, you may find an occasion in which the symptom serves some useful purpose, so it may temporarily remerge and then automatically disappear...”*

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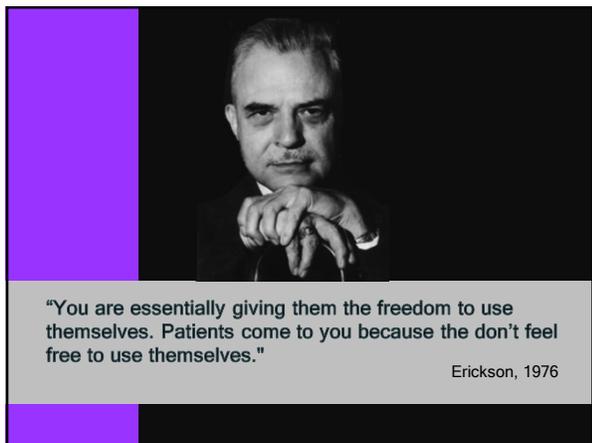
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P  
Permissive

### Permissive

- Erickson described permissive suggestion is an adaptation of indirect suggestion. The basic premise is that people can be trusted to use their unconscious mind to discover the most appropriate solution.
- Clients are directed to exercise choice throughout the process of hypnosis & treatment
- Clients are active participants that exercise complete freedom of will as the process of doing something is suggested (the client supplies the content)

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**P**  
Permissive

## Process-Oriented Suggestion

- “I don’t think the therapist does anything except provide the opportunity to think about your problem in a favorable climate.” Erickson, 1980
- During hypnosis, you do not try to make the person go into trance, or make them forget, or remember, or have insight, or feel good, rather you guide them on a path of self-discovery
- As the operator, you are responsible for the effect you have; you monitor all reactions closely and make adjustments accordingly.

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**P**  
Permissive

## Self-Organizing Change

- “When a client comes to see you, they always bring their solution with them, only they don’t realize that they do, so have a very nice time helping a client discover the solution they brought that they didn’t know they brought.” Erickson, 1977, as recalled by Rob McNeilly
- An assumption that the mind is capable of self-healing, growth, and self-determination
- “...the answer you need is already within you.”
- “...during hypnosis you can *really* do what you came here to do.”

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**P**  
Permissive

## General Direction

**Some clients need permission to:**

- Be childlike
- Have fun
- Make mistakes
- Act w/o judgment
- Think w/o criticism
- Breath
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Feel safe
- Access memories
- Feel smart
- Trust intuition
- Solve problems
- Make friends
- Exist

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## Dynamic Interplay

- Power is not in the suggestion itself but the dynamic interplay of the client's experiential learnings
- The definition of dynamic is a process or system characterized by constant change, activity, or progress. The definition of interplay is the way two or more things relate to each other or affect each other.
- **Reorientation**: when unconscious thought becomes conscious, or conscious thought is "forgotten", when the present is examined from the past or future, then vs. now, here vs. there, this part of the body and that part of the body

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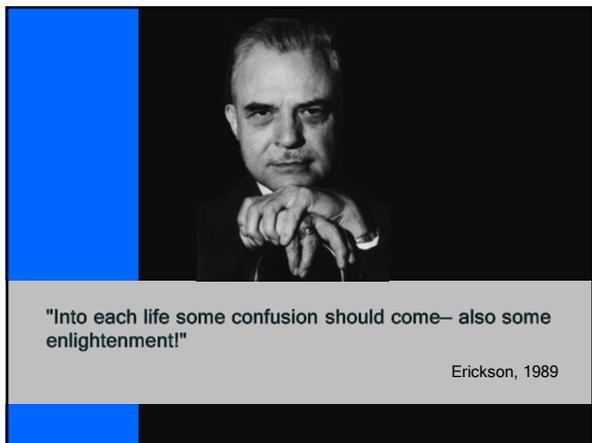
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It  
Indistinct

## Indistinct

- Because it is obscure to the conscious mind; the experience can be difficult to understand or make out, not clearly defined or separate in such a manner as to be distinct from other parts of therapy.
- All the suggestions may be indirect or ambiguous, resulting in a temporary state of confusion.
- Once activated in the proper direction, it is the unconscious mind, not the conscious mind, that is the agent of change.
- The unconscious mind has awareness of needs and experiences that are unknown to the conscious mind. Therefore, addressing needs on an unconscious level is paramount, while awareness of problem resolution may or may not be realized on a conscious level.
- Conscious activity is relatively unimportant, the only thing of paramount importance is the reorganization of unconscious thinking, which takes place without conscious awareness

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**It**  
Indistinct

- "The unconscious is a manufacturer and the conscious is a consumer; trance is the mediator between them." Erickson 1976
- The unconscious mind can only focus on one thing at a time and therefore cannot view complex situations in a comprehensive way. The conscious mind blindly seeks to develop reasonable explanations for emotions, behaviors, and actions that are actually under the control of unconscious processes (7 second delay)
- Indirect suggestion: Create a healing atmosphere without specific instructions for how healing is to occur. Instead convey the idea that change is possible and that the desired resolution is imminent
- Aim for the activation of internal healing activities at an unconscious level. The primary therapeutic goal is unconscious learning, rather than conscious insight.
- Individualized: The therapist always seeks to adapt to the patient
- **Multi-Level Communication:** use of primary process language: implication, innuendo, seeding/priming, interspersal, intonation, storytelling, metaphors, non-verbal information, use of symbols & ritual.

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**It**  
Indistinct

### Suggest Unconscious Processing

- Direct suggestion is designed to achieve specific outcomes. Indirect suggestion is designed to stimulate a dynamic use of existing associations & mental capabilities.
- "...you don't really need to listen to me because your unconscious mind will hear. You can let your conscious mind wander in any direction."

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