

Forward by Roxanna Erickson-Klein

Manual de Crecimiento by Teresa Robles 2015 (French Translation)

These short introductory words are written in Rio de Janeiro where I have spent a week teaching with Teresa Robles. We share a deep interest in Ericksonian approaches and a fascination for the way that this general direction of looking at the world has so many different ways of expressing itself. This week has been of special significance because it is the centennial celebration of my mother's birthday and has given rise to many spontaneous discussions about the importance of love and relationships.

I first learned of Teresa's work about 1990 when I attended a presentation she gave on the topic of "disguises". At that time I was impressed with the paradoxically simple yet deep way she talked about working with problems encountered daily in professional practices. She proposed a very practical metaphor for conceptualizing effects that expectations of others have on the way we learn to look at ourselves. Teresa's metaphorical use of "disguises" referring to the perceptions and responses to us, by those around us, offers a framework for understanding many layers of our own experiences.

From that initial contact with Teresa, I became a student of her ideas, interested in the next development of her creative evolution. She is a gifted teacher bringing therapeutic guidance to her students; describing, clarifying and role modeling exploration through intuitive pathways that seem simple and very natural. Within the schema are layers of depth that are neither as direct nor as superficial as they may initially appear.

Teresa's artistic demonstrations, accompanied by clearly delineated schemas, produce results that reach deep into the souls of each of us. She credits this methodology with following the style of Milton Erickson in his latter years. Those same years were my own interval of early adulthood living at home when I began to ponder about the reasons that so many students made pilgrimages from all around the world to see him. Looking at his work through the eyes of a grown child, I was mystified by the paradox of his use of general language that his students credited with being not only specific, but specifically targeted to them – individually. I see parallels with the way that Teresa works. Shared universal concerns, problems and even solutions are embedded within the "stories" related both by the student and by the teacher.

The paradox of general but specific is what turns an individual situation into a matter far greater than you or I. Wisdom that reaches beyond the individual is called upon to guide each of us in a healing direction. Erickson leaned on his belief of the benevolence of the unconscious mind. Teresa speaks of Universal Wisdom. Each is a resource that extends beyond the immediate situation into the vast expanses of time, experience, learnings gained over a lifetime, and even learnings that have come through the experiences of earlier generations or the broader cultural. Teresa speaks of the way that Universal Wisdom taps into the resources of the universe as a whole: Erickson explained the resources of the unconscious mind as having indelibly recorded all of life's experiences. While there may be a philosophical difference in how far one can actually reach, both approaches reach is far beyond the felt limitations that burden people with problems. Learning to trust something greater than present

surroundings is what precipitates an expectation of ability to find possibilities, balance, and to begin healing.

While part of Erickson's genius resided in an uncanny ability to notice details of non-verbal expressions, Teresa has cultivated her ability to notice the congruency of verbal and non-verbal interactions. She explores communication in another way, asking for feelings, images, colors, sensations, words, expressions, and ideas that tell of adaptive capacity we each hold within. She connects on an unconscious level, same as Erickson did. One cannot consciously identify the whole meaning that lies within and beyond symbolic imagery-- it must be accepted as meaningful in its own way. Teresa's own spirituality, combined with her background in anthropology, passion for languages and deep appreciation for cultural belonging give her an exceptional advantage in bringing forth the unknown and unexpressed. In this way, she is as mysterious and magical as Milton Erickson himself.

Her primary tool is one of Hypnotic Conversation. Teresa often begins her exploration with a few scarce questions and transitions into a series of tales, often about herself, her children or grandchildren. While the interactions may take the form of a casual conversation, a preface for beginning work, she is watching closely for responses, occasionally asking for verbal input. In addition to harvesting responses, she is seeding the garden with possibilities, connections, adaptation and, discoveries. By the time the subject is engaged in a formal, ceremonial schema, most of the therapeutic work is already well underway. The unconscious search is already activated, new understandings, and new associations are already beginning to find expression within the listener. Like Erickson, Teresa enters a trance state, and trusts her own internal wisdom to lead the way -- and trusts the internal wisdom of the listener to find relevance in the manner in which the strings of stories connect. Teresa sometimes a more formalized schema, and Erickson sometimes used a more formal trance induction than other times. Each of them use post-hypnotic suggestion to allow space for one's internal experience to trigger re-visiting of the hypnotic state in search of more clarity, decision making or self-discovery. Erickson encouraged his subjects to take note of their daily experiences. Teresa has a ritualistic prescription of noticing one's state and asking for guidance from Universal Wisdom, Different yet alike, the results evoked are quite similar. Both Erickson's subjects and Teresa's each report life changing experiences in an exceedingly short interval of time.

It is not uncommon for me to meet one of my father's students or patients from many years ago who tells me about a pivotal life experience he stimulated within them. I am always curious about the way that a seemingly simple moment impacted a lifetime. Yet these personal anecdotes are still expressed to myself and to each of my siblings—homages to our father thirty- five years after his death-- often many more years since the key interaction took place. Teresa's work is relatively new, it has not yet had opportunity to stand the test of time. I suspect that it will endure even as it continues to evolve.

Roxanna Erickson-Klein

2015