

## VIDEOTAPE REVIEW

### *My Personal Trance with Milton H. Erickson M.D. Past and Present*

by Maryann Reese, M.A., L.M.F.T.  
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Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785

*My Personal Trance With Milton H. Erickson M.D.* contains an archival video of Erickson during a teaching session in 1979. Maryann Reese, the primary hypnotic subject during this demonstration, retrieved this tape from her personal collection of material and decided it might be useful for others.

During the introduction, Reese gives a good sense of what it was like to be in the room with Erickson. She also gives an overview of many of the techniques demonstrated and discuss-

es how this tape still influences her way of thinking. There is an anecdotal description of some of what she experienced in the trance as well as what it has meant to her subsequently; she describes the seminar as having a pivotal influence on both her personal and professional life. It was a "unique experience which I did not realize at the time."

Subtitles and the accompanying script make it easy to follow Erickson's suggestions that would otherwise be difficult to understand. The content of the work done, however, is so interesting that one soon forgets the subtitles. Erickson shows economy of words as he works with a reluctant subject--she seemed to deliberately oppose some of the more direct suggestions. When Erickson suggested she close her eyes and uncross her legs, her response was not immediate; it demonstrated the ability of a subject to maintain autonomy

while accepting trance suggestions.

The camera remains focused on Reese the majority of the time. This allows you to see the influence of Erickson's words as he speaks them and to watch the physical cues which Erickson then integrates into his suggestions. However, you do not see much of Erickson as he speaks.

The recording of the demonstration is, of course, not as sharp as is the recent introduction and conclusion. Reese has done an excellent job with the introduction and conclusion as well as with subtitles for most of the tape. The demonstration ends after only 20 minutes and the disappointment is more acute because the ending occurs just as someone asks an interesting question about the use of hypnosis in another venue.

The value of this tape is its archival and experiential nature. There are precious few resources that actually show Erickson at work. This video

provides an opportunity for a student to capture the subtleties of Erickson's multi-level approach and to muse over his introduction to the trance state he induces. It reemphasizes the complexities of Erickson's approach in ways the viewer can watch and re-watch, each time, as Reese says, discovering something new. Only primary source material has this ability.

At the conclusion of *My Personal Trance*, Reese suggests that the watcher listen to Erickson's suggestions and respond and experience with one's own way "...know your own personal trance." She describes this as a clear and precise demonstration of the power and elegance of Milton H. Erickson, M.D. As Erickson told her, "There is always something more to learn."

**Reviewed by:**  
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