

# LEADING CONTRIBUTORS

## *Jeffrey K. Zeig, Ph.D.* *Phoenix, AZ*

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Known world-wide as the leading proponent of Ericksonian psychotherapy, Jeff Zeig, Ph.D., has made contributions of such magnitude as to earn recognition as a leader of leaders. Founder and director of the Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Zeig has done more than any other individual to promote recognition of the work of Dr. Erickson. Even more remarkable, Zeig has engineered a series of remarkable conferences called "The Evolution of Psychotherapy" that has brought together more leaders in the field than any other person in history.

Zeig is an exceptionally talented organizer and planner. He has conducted workshops, congresses and conferences in 35 countries. However, in addition to being an accomplished teacher, lecturer, author and adept practitioner, Zeig is someone who diligently seeks-out and advances the work of those whose talent he admires.

Just after completing his master's degree in clinical psychology, fortuitous circumstances led Zeig to visit Erickson and meet the man whose work he had studied and admired. In that initial meeting Zeig learned first hand about the power and the pivotal influence that can occur in moments of ordinary interaction.

Although a myriad of professionals sought to study with Erickson, only a handful were given the opportunity to work with him over a period of time. Zeig's interval of study, 1973-1980, occurred when Erickson was becoming widely recognized for his innovative approaches and contributions to brief therapy. Zeig, intrigued by the seemingly simple yet highly effective interventions, immersed himself in Erickson's teachings.

Upon completion of his doctoral degree, Zeig planned an event to honor the person whose teachings had been so central to his own professional outlook. He also wanted to broaden the opportunity for others to study and learn more about Erickson's work. In 1980, Zeig orchestrated a meeting to coincide with Erickson's 79th birthday that would focus on material relevant to the newly emerging "Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy." Although Erickson died nine months prior to the Congress, he enjoyed the knowledge that the meeting would be attended in monumental numbers.

Erickson worked with Zeig to establish the Foundation, which became the instrument through which conferences continue to be held. With the groundwork completed, and the success of the first Congress, Zeig continued to establish ways to provide cutting-edge training for a generation of therapists who were eager and ready to break-away from the constraints of traditional therapeutic thinking.

While continuing to promote Ericksonian approaches and to hone his own therapeutic skills, Zeig also forged relationships among leaders from diverse therapeutic ideologies. Nurtured by the Zeig's organizational genius, The Evolution of Psychotherapy emerged as a meeting in which leaders came together from virtually every major psychotherapeutic approach. In this venue, for the first time, dialogue and debate among great innovators in therapy was presented in a forum in which professionals could witness and participate. Held every five years since its inception in 1985, the Evolution of Psychotherapy conferences have stimulated continuing dialogues, commentaries and searches for common elements among diverse ideologies. Therapists who study these efforts are given an opportunity to reflect upon and refine their own ideologies and therapeutic positions.

Although Zeig has learned from his contacts with the most talented practitioners of our time, he has remained dedicated to the development of Ericksonian approaches as representative of his own core commitment to the best in psychotherapy.

Jeff Zeig's concern with human welfare, his readiness to embrace intellectual diversity and his devotion to personal and professional development has cre-

ated a unique ability to bring forth the wisdom of others. He is the dreamer behind the Milton H. Erickson Foundation. Without him, there would be no Foundation, fewer Ericksonian Institutes around the world, and no Evolution of Psychotherapy conferences. Zeig's willingness to pursue a dream has resulted in a series of events that will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the future of psychotherapy.