

CONTRIBUTOR OF NOTE

JOHN D LENTZ
D.Min.

By Roxanna Erickson Klein RN, Ph.D.

Trained in a Presbyterian seminary and ordained as a minister Dr. John Lentz's background extends from theological teaching and prison counseling to private practice. These experiences make him particularly well qualified to look the spiritual interface of professional counseling.

Lentz attributes his initial interest in Ericksonian approaches to study done when he was working on his dissertation. Within the prison population, Lentz investigated the idea of responding to manipulation in ways that enhance relationships and yet maintain safety. That work led to the book Effective Handling of Manipulative Persons, described on Amazon as an excellent resource for persons new to working with inmates. Ericksonian principles facilitate the maintenance of solid boundaries yet provide tools to sidestep manipulative gestures.

During Lentz's seminary training, a professor, David A. Steere Ph.D, influenced Lentz with his forward and expansive thinking. Steere's creative ideology drew Lentz to Erickson's work. While receiving



supervision as a prison counselor/chaplain he sought to learn more about Erickson. But, attending major conferences during December simply did not fit with the holiday tides at the prison. Lentz read and listened to audiotapes of experts, but it was not until he saw demonstrations that he fully recognized the power of Ericksonian techniques. The clarity of shared trance work, so apparent visually, is not always evident in other forms of teaching.

Meeting Zeig at a seminar in 1986, Lentz became more interested in both learning and teaching Ericksonian approaches. In his professional teaching he found that many counselors had a bias against hypnosis. This was particularly true among

those who were not familiar with the work of Erickson. Lentz believes that by having a more open dialogue about the interface of hypnosis and spirituality, new understandings can be reached. By 1998, Lentz and some of his former students established the Milton H. Erickson Institute of Jeffersonville, Indiana.

In addition to the book on manipulation, Lentz has written Therapeutic Metaphors, Spiritual Solutions to Anxiety and Panic and How the Word Heals. Lentz also has created a series of audio CDs on topics including anger management and forgiveness. The publications provide resources for laypersons while also offering valuable information to professionals. Reaching a broad audi-

ence is an area of special interest to Lentz. He remarked about the book on anxiety that his intent is to create a small readable book that has the power to reach out and relieve suffering.

Retired from prison work in 2000, Lentz continues to teach and recently conducted a workshop for the MFT Association of Kentucky. He maintains a private practice, and one of the things Lentz most enjoys is his work as a part-time minister in rural church 25 miles south of Shepardsville. Every sermon is hypnotically laden with positive regard and ways of enhancing relationships with God.

Lentz remains interested in the transformational therapeutic aspects of trance work. Using hypnotic principles and tools, unconscious resources and past knowledge can support positive growth and nurture sensations of love and compassion. These experiences can be transformational, even when they are not consciously memorable. Currently Lentz is exploring ideas about how to enhance effective communications; in 2006 he launched a column for the Newsletter *In The Spirit of Therapy*. Exploring personal spiritual perspectives of leaders in psychotherapy encourages introspection.

Nurturing a greater appreciation for the sacred potential of the psyche is the essence of the work of John Lentz!