

# INTRODUCING THE INSTITUTES

## *The Milton H. Erickson Institute of The California Central Coast*

Written By Roxanna Erickson Klein

*The Milton H. Erickson Institute of the California Central Coast (MHE-CCC) was officially formed and accepted into the Foundation network of institutes in 2008. Among Dr. Erickson's most well-known and able protégés, Ernest and Kathryn Rossi have been instrumental in the updating and republication of the original works of Milton Erickson. This interview with Kathryn Rossi, tells us a little about their Institute, and of the evolution of psychotherapy as it has developed in Los Osos, California.*



*Kathryn and Ernest Rossi*

**REK: Ernest has been well known for his teaching as long as any of Erickson's students. You also have been involved in this teaching for some time—why did you decide now to create the MHE-CCC?**

**KLR:** Well actually, Roxie, we had thought about creating an MHE Institute in our area for quite some time. Now that Ernie is 75-years old and in excellent health the timing seemed right: Ernie's application of Erickson's mind-body approaches to healing to facilitate his recovery from stroke was almost miraculous. We are enthusiastic about reaching out in our teaching to a broad international group.

**REK: Tell me about the Board of Directors:**

**KLR:** In our decision to set up this institute, we were encouraged by two extraordinary women, Ella Soleimany and Margaret Bullock. Each is a psychotherapist and MFT who has participated in our teaching. We wish to expand their roles, because exposure to broader viewpoints is fundamental to what we teach. These friends have been indispensable in creating our success.

**REK: Tell us about the work that you are doing.**

**KLR:** Like Erickson, we teach small groups of six to twelve professionals in our home offices. Some groups and individuals want to come for a day or two, and some for as much as a week or two. As Milton did, we use long, private sessions from 90 to 120 minutes at a time, adapting to the needs of each individual as well as the group. We focus on Ernest's hand mirroring innovations in facilitating therapeutic hypnosis and psychotherapy. Our ideal is for everyone to experience and conduct live demonstrations, which are video recorded on a DVD that can be taken home for further individual study.

The first meetings of our Institute were amazing. By the fourth meeting there was so much interest that we are now re-visiting whether or not our space is large enough to follow through with the group work we are doing, especially now that we offer continuing education units for MFTs, LCSWs and California Psychologists.

**REK: Ernest has been such an esteemed teacher in high demand throughout the world, this transition into teaching from home is a real change. I notice the MHE-CCC mirrors ways in which Ernest studied with Erickson. Did you model it after Erickson's home seminars of the 70's?**

**KLR:** Yes, indeed! We have modeled how Milton taught a new generation of students and professionals in his office at your family home in Phoenix. Because we have done so much traveling, the joy of being home is boundless. We love it when the world comes to us for mutual facilitation!

A growing part of our program is video conferencing both for teaching and individual psychotherapy sessions. Currently, we are setting up video conferencing sessions for workshops in Italy and India. We invite other Erickson Institutes to participate in video conferencing with us as an economical and documentable method of learning and progressing together. We are currently publishing our first paper in Italy with a research group using DNA micro array's to assess therapeutic hypnosis and psychotherapy at the molecular-genomic level.

We encourage graduate school training programs throughout the world to explore the possibility of coordinating with our video conferencing workshops as a source of live contemporary data on the current evolution of psychotherapy. Many Master's and Doctoral level theses could be generated by such coordination. Working together, we can advance what is known while refining our own techniques and methods.

**REK: Has your work together at the Institute brought with it new understanding of the reciprocal process of teaching with a partner?**

**KLR:** The synergy of Ernie and I teaching together reminds me of the Gestalt principle. The whole is more than the sum of the parts. We experience greater richness and understanding as we are learning. It is a process of shared knowledge that extends to include the group we are working with. We all benefit from the expanding international outreach.

**REK: Does taking advantage of the comfort and harmony of your home environment amplify the learning and make it easier for students to continue their learning back at their own homes?**

**KLR:** Absolutely! Our local newspaper ran an article about our home entitled, "A Creative Retreat for the Mind." We live directly in nature. Outside our windows are the ocean, sand dunes, an estuary and mountain views. A block from our home is the crown jewel of California State Parks, Montaña de Oro. Our participants take advantage of opportunities to walk, hike, kayak, horseback ride, surf, fish, bird watch, or pursue other rich activities. The act of being in nature consolidates the new learning and excites the numinosum. The fundamental underlying premise of our work is that optimal gene expression and brain plasticity comes from novelty, enrichment and exercise.

**REK: This is truly the horizon of the evolution of psychotherapy -- reaching out internationally while generating opportunities for shared knowledge and insight. Thank you for the fine work you are doing.**

**KLR:** And thank you. We would like to invite our colleagues to learn more about our programs, and in particular, we would like to offer our international colleagues to check out the possibilities by clicking on our "Free Book" on our MHE-CCC website at [www.MHE-CCC](http://www.MHE-CCC) or [www.ErnestRossi.com](http://www.ErnestRossi.com).

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