

**This handout is an excerpt from a manual of a two day workshop I gave on Advanced Integrative Hypnosis. I always start and end the day with trance. You will get to see nested loops in action and sit in on a bit of my class to learn how easy this stuff is. I suggest you read the trance slooowly, in your best hypnotic voice, to really get the feel of it. Remember to pause at each comma and calibrate to your own breathing. Oh, and remember to enjoy yourself.**

### **Day two- Opening Trance**

Today we are going to learn how to play with words, build embedded metaphors, cast magical spells, install confidence anchors, and a few other surprises.

*So, if everyone would just get comfortable, put both feet on the floor and take a nice, deep breath in....and exhale, good. Now another deep breath in and hold.....now, let it go....that's right, allow your eyes to close, your muscles relax and sink in, now, relaxing more and more with every breath. In a moment I will ask you all to open and then close your eyes. Each time you open and close your eyes, you can go deeper into trance. It's easy, as you know. Now, open your eyes....and close, go deeper, good. Now open...close, that's right, notice how that feels, now again, open...and close, good, now let yourself really sink in, nice and comfortable. I will ask your unconscious to take you deep into an altered state. All the way, now, letting go of all those muscles relaxing more, that's it, feels good. Today we are looking closer at the amazing power of words, of metaphors and the stories that we all have, to share and inspire. When I first fell in love with the work of Milton Erickson, I was in awe of his artful mastery. I would quote him so I could use his teaching tales, his stories, to help my clients. I would say, "Milton Erickson used to tell a story about a horse...." And I found this to be an easy way to go. I was able to feel I was using the power of therapeutic metaphors, in a way that was already proven to be trance-formative. I didn't realize what Erickson's work really had to show me.*

*Words. The power of words. They are one of the most important tools of our trade. Aren't they? When put together well, it's poetry. Words help us communicate our map of the world to someone else's idea of reality. We have the ability, to put problems into the past and resources into the future, with just words. They say that the words we use make up only ten percent of our communication, well, I don't know if that is true, but I know that the same word can have many different meanings when spoken in different ways. I read a quote from a four year old boy that said "when someone loves you they say your name different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth" I love that. Those words move me. I know, as well as you know, that when someone says "no" depending on the tone, facial expression, body language and emphasis, it can be a question, a statement, a command, an exclamation, a dose of sarcasm, a scream of excitement or disbelief, like when offered a gift. I once heard a recording of Milton Erickson, where he talked about saving up his money when he was young, to see this actor perform who had only one word to say. He said "no" in over thirty different ways. This is exactly the kind of thing I would think Erickson would love. He understood congruence. And he understood the power of being incongruent.*

*I once had a client who was in therapy for 22 years. She had been talking about her problems for so long that she didn't know who she would be without them. Well, this woman came to me because I had helped a friend of hers. So she walks into my office, hands me her referral and before her coat is even off, she starts telling me all the different types of complexes and disorders she has. Well, anyone that knows me knows that I don't do therapy and I don't allow whining in my office. So, it's one of the rare occasions I use the hand shake interrupt in my office. I had to, it was self- defense. So, I took her on a bit of a journey and I had her imagine walking down a path, and as she walked down this path she came to a big boulder blocking her way. Now, I told her, this boulder had been there for many years and for many years a part of her had been attempting to chip away*

*at this thing. She had even hired many people to help her try to move it out of her way. She sent the small samples she had managed to chip off, to be analyzed and labeled so she might find out what kind of obstacle she was dealing with.*

*Now, I told her, that she had been so focused on the big boulder blocking her way, stopping her from moving forward on her path, that she had missed something very important.*

*We all do that sometimes. We focus so hard on our obstacles, our issues, that we miss the very things that can easily move us past them. The question isn't about why. It's about how. And maybe what, like what can we learn from all this and maybe when, like when can we begin to leave it all behind. Now, as I heard Bandler say "the best part about the past, is that it's over. And the future, is coming". And you might be amazed at how much brighter your future can be, now that you know that you can play in the space where there is no space and time is on your side. On the inside and the out side because you can learn all of these things, easily and effortlessly. You will be integrating them into every aspect of what you do.*

*So, I told this woman that she had missed something very important. If she looked to her right she would notice a little pathway. A pathway she hadn't noticed before. It had been there all along, waiting for her to notice. For her to simply change her focus and look in a different direction. I told her that when she walked along this path she would find that it made its way around the very boulder she had been wasting all that time dealing with. It lead her around the right side of the boulder and she came out the other side and the boulder was left behind her. I told her to notice how much sunnier it was now that the shadow of that rock was behind her. I told her there was an old Maori proverb which said "Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you" and they were. Already. And try as she might to go back to the old spot, it would never be the*

*same. Once you know the easy way, you can never forget it. And every step forward is another step away from that old way.*

*Words, just words strung together in a new way. Words coupled with the intention to help, can change everything. You have to mean what you say even when it's a challenge to say what you mean.*

*And that story had a lot of meaning for her. I didn't know or want to know what was etched in that stone. She did. And that's what mattered. And the important thing that Erickson showed me, was that we all have stories to tell. It's not about his tales, it's about yours and the clients, because we all have had things we learned from, challenges we overcame and things that inspired us. The mesmerizing power of a good story can not be underestimated. And we are all excellent examples of how we write our own stories everyday. We are the authors of this life script and that means we can always erase, delete, update and embellish. So the question is, in your story,....what do you want to happen next? And how easily can you make that happen?*

*Now, come on back at your own rate and speed. Shake it off and get ready to play.*

Today you're going to learn to create metaphors the easy way. You need to understand that any good story works. I'm going to give you a bunch of examples of how I do this, in some way, with every single client, even if it's just talking about a funny thing my daughter said. A lot of people in this field, when you say therapeutic metaphors, you see that glazed look come across their face. Why? I'm not sure, but when I read some of the books on how to structure metaphors, it seemed complex, multi-layered and complicated, and I thought, ugh, I can't do that. It's way too much work. It doesn't have to be. I am always

telling stories to my clients. I tell stories to build expectation, to educate and to build rapport. It's easy, just engage them, talk about something that you know will help and entertain them. You can always talk about a client that you already helped with this same problem. It not only builds expectation, it shows them that you have already helped someone get over this problem and gives the process more credibility.

Now I have these things, these little devices that automatically do this for me. I keep a dish of stone rings on my desk, and when I ask my clients to pick a ring, they all look at me like, "uh, cool. Why?" And then I always tell them, "Well, I give this one-breath trigger to everyone I work with, for instant stress reduction and craving elimination, (or, if it's nail biting, I link it to that). And then I say... "but what was happening was that people would come back the next week and I would say "Have you been practicing this one breath trigger?" and they'd say, "No, because I haven't had any cravings, I can't believe how easy this is, it's awesome!" And I'd put on that face as if I'm upset by that and I'd say "But if you don't use it, you lose it." .

"So, if that's true for you too, this ring will remind you to do the one-breath trigger. So now, I am going to say to you, when you are in trance, that even if you're having no cravings and no unwanted stress, every time you notice the ring you'll remember to do this one breath trigger." Okay, so, what does that do? Not only does it set up the expectation, right, but you've suggested that chances are, they'll have no craving. But it also shows that I've done this before, and that most people don't have any craving, right? Now it's just another way, using these things, to allow you to tell a story. And I think it's these little things that make a difference. Why? Because it sets them up—they're wearing the ring—every time they look at the ring they're not only reminded to do the one-breath technique, but they remember why I gave it to them, because they'll most likely not experience any craving. Okay? So that's one way of doing it.

And I call that a tiny teaching tale— Erickson used to say that—[in funny voice]“Well I knew a girl, problem like yours...” So when I do that, if I’m talking to people about stress management or anger management, I’ll relate certain stories like—“I was in this taxi, on the way here, and this guy was so annoying, and I started to actually let it bother me, and then I realized, why do I need to take on his shit? We’re always taking on other people’s nasty moods, and meanwhile, every emotion has a bio-chemical counterpart so I’m taking on his crap and I’m changing physiologically, taking on those nasty hormones and chemicals that are associated with his anger...” --

So whatever it is, you throw it in, these little tidbits, these little stories, people understand them and if they don’t, part of them is going to try to, so you’re getting a lot of things accomplished at once. You’re talking about the biochemistry of emotions, and their ability to actually change their body. And that’s when I’ll talk about laughter, and how it boosts the immune system and lowers the stress hormones. Now that they are learning to alter their emotional state, everything can change. They’re going to be healthier, stronger, have clarity of focus, all of these things. And what is that, except bombarding them with these suggestions.

Now I’m in New York City and if I ever said to a New Yorker, “and when Lancelot and Guinevere...”I feel that some might feel patronized or just plain annoyed. You don’t need it. I understand Jungian therapy and I understand working with archetypes and what the fairy tale structure can do, but I don’t feel it’s necessary. You’re much better off keeping it something they can relate to—it ain’t Lancelot, it’s the fucked up cab driver on the way here, all right? It’s my daughter at school, getting teased or nervous about learning something new. And I use all of this stuff. Think of something-- and this is going to be an exercise for you soon— think of something, a story from your life. It doesn’t have to be elaborate; it doesn’t have to be structured in any way...all that will come. Just like the embedded command. The more you do it, the more it becomes natural to subtly shift your voice when you want to make a point. Okay? That will come too.



Hey, you guys had some great stories going on! I was walking around the room with a big grin on my face, and seeing how I trained most of you, I can take all the credit. Ok, maybe not all. I heard embedded commands for change and learning, lot's of linkage words and tonal shifts.....you done good. Real good.

Now we are going to add some more fun to it. The next thing we are going to talk about is nesting loops, otherwise known as embedded metaphors. The best book I have read on this is called "The answer within" and it's by Steven and Carol Lankton. That is a great book on Erickson and how to structure therapeutic metaphors. They have another book which is a collection of beautiful metaphors called "Tales of Enchantment"

The easiest way to learn this is to make up three stories and imagine each one had to be broken in half and continued at another time. This means you want to have a cliff hanger, some way of keeping them interested. Now, relax about this, it doesn't have to be that big of a cliff hanger, it's not like they're going anywhere. So you start a story, but don't finish it. Then you go right into another and don't finish that and then do the third, but don't finish that. Now you are in the center of your nested loops. This is where you want to inject direct suggestions for your outcome.

You switch to a more direct form of communication, because, the theory is that at this point the client is in a deeper state of hypnosis. At the deeper levels of trance the mind is far more literal.

Now you come up in the reverse order, story wise, that you took them down in. Imagine three steps going down. When you want to climb back up, you step on the last step you hit on the way down, then the second and then the first. So if you went down with story 1, 2, and 3 then you lead them back up with, 3, 2, and 1. Got it? Some people will have amnesia for the direct suggestions that were in the middle if you do it this way.



In the opening trance today I used this format. I started with the story of how I first started using Erickson's tales. The cliff hanger (well, sort of) was when I said something like "But, I was missing the most important thing Erickson was trying to show me" I then went right into a little story about words and the power of language. Then I went into the story of the woman with the boulder. You don't remember? Ah well, that happens a lot. The direct suggestions in the middle were for you all giving me your pin numbers for your bank accounts. You don't remember that either? No, the direct suggestions were that you will learn all this easily and effortlessly and that you can integrate all these things into what you do.

So that's an easy way to embed metaphors. When you read the other books I recommended on the subject you will laugh at my oversimplification. But that's Ok, laughter is a good thing. And when you do read those books they will make sense right away because you will have already been nesting loops.

An open loop is when you don't come back and finish the story. This is good for those open ended questions for the unconscious to mull over. It's also good because it allows the client to make up the ending for themselves.

We will have a twenty minute break so you all can get creative. You will come up with three little stories to nest. Aw, c'mon, it's so much easier than you think. You just need to jot down some ideas, some things that made you learn, change or feel inspired. Do you remember that time when something happened that changed the way you thought or felt about yourself, your life or your belief system? Yes, you remember. Now, think of another. Maybe a story you heard that moved you. Got it? Good.