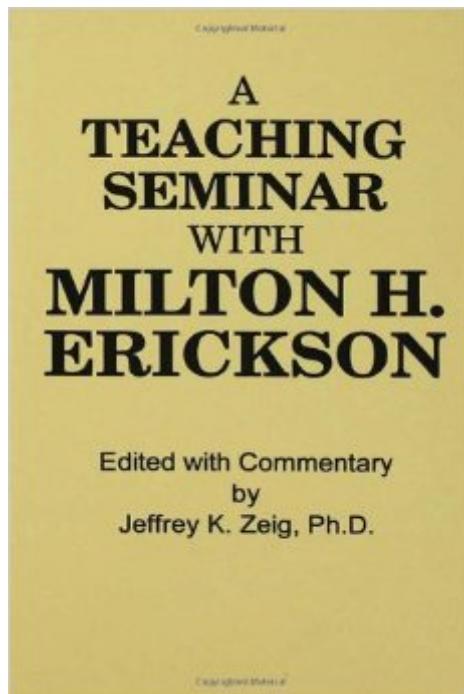


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A Teaching Seminar With Milton H. Erickson



Synopsis

This volume presents the complete transcript of a five-day seminar with Milton Erickson. Here the reader will experience Erickson talking about his method of therapy, demonstrating his techniques, telling one fascinating anecdote after another - anecdotes which often produce feelings of cognitive dissonance and surprise, but eventually illuminate new ways of seeing patients and thinking about psychotherapy. In his introductory chapter, Jeffrey Zelig demonstrates how Erickson used anecdotes to communicate on several levels at once in an extremely powerful way. In addition, the appendix provides a detailed discussion by Erickson and Zelig of two introductions in the transcripts, revealing the precision of Erickson's teaching, in which every movement every inflection and every association have significance.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a direct transcript of a week long hypnosis/psychotherapy seminar performed by Milton Erickson at the end of his life, and at the height of his expertise. It reads with the hypnotic fluidity of a good novel while teaching a tremendous amount- about many things. Erickson weaves his way through various teaching tales while interacting with people in the seminar. The reader is pulled down into one story, only to emerge back into the world of a previous story from a few pages back. While adrift between worlds, the reader learns an awful lot about psychotherapy, hypnosis, human behavior, farm life, developmental processes- to name a few.

This is one of my favorite Ericksonian books. I've read about 30 books on Ericksonianism in the 4 years I've been at it. The video of the girl who shows up late to the class, who Erickson immediately uses as an hypnotic subject, is available on youtube, so you can see what is happening. Erickson in his later years did not have the force in his voice he did in his earlier years. This is because he was able to use only 1/2 of his diaphragm and had no teeth. So, unlike his earlier material, you have to work a bit harder to penetrate some of his teachings. All his words are so carefully selected, you can spend a long time studying what he meant. Most of the things he said contained 2 or more simultaneous meanings. If you are philosophical or mystical you will have a better time comprehending. Although Erickson isn't generally viewed that way, because of his naturalistic approach, his material has a way of taking a person out of their body and into a transcendental place that is not a place. This is something overlooked by academia, who are too busy focusing not on the context but on the parts. The reason being an Ericksonian-style hypnotist is so difficult is because to be at his level, you have to be at his level. That is something that is a result of truth in reality, which goes quite far beyond the standard academic teachings of earth-bound universities, except perhaps in the philosophical department, or in the physics department if Dewey Larson's correct postulates are taught. Nevertheless, if you read his words with an open mind, curious about where his words can take you, you will benefit greatly -- although you may not realize just how that can be. That is not important for you know. In this world, there is not telling. For words only point. This book is simultaneously phenomenal and unreal. Erickson is the most wise person to have lived in the last 1000 years. This book, written in his own language, reveals why.

As a student studying psychology, this is a great find. Throughout reading the book one notices that Erickson does not really use psychological theory to bring about change in a patient. Erickson sneaks in life experience implicitly in the stories he tells the group. One of my favorite parts of the book is when Erickson is asked about life and death. Erickson makes the joke, "just remember to wake up", I laughed at how simple but genius this statement was.

I think I'd have to say this book is every bit as important to understanding Erickson and his methods as *Hypnotherapy: An Exploratory Casebook*. It's similarly broad, and shares quite a few stories with the Casebook, but told in new ways. The inclusion of Erickson's interactions with his students throughout the teaching provides an invaluable angle on all those "old" lessons - and there's plenty new, as well. There's not only a lot to learn here about hypnotherapy, but also about psychotherapy in general, and the human mind's irrational but predictable patterns. The appendix, which makes up

a solid 20% of the book, provides a very useful meta-commentary wherein Zeig and Erickson go over a portion of the seminar and pause to discuss various things as they unfold. It's a sort of director's commentary, and being able to observe Erickson discuss the why and how of his methods in such detail is a privilege. The whole book is full of such insights, but the appendix is especially rich. I'm not one to highlight books, but I highlighted a good 20-30 passages in the course of this one. I'd also add that it's a good read for the analytical depressive who wants to get better but feels they can't possibly. I recommended it to just such a friend, who devoured the book in a weekend and promptly found themselves in a forward-thinking state of epiphany. As Erickson liked to say, the patient does all the work - the therapist just creates a fertile environment for change. For some, that lesson is just what they need to break the illusion of being powerless.

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