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Hypnosis: The three amazing “E”s of the post-Freud era; Erickson, Estabrooks and Elman

Freud studied rejected the use of hypnosis with patients due to his desire to slow the development of transference. The science of hypnosis progressed to heights he would never have imagined through the work of three geniuses of the field: Milton Erickson, MD, George Estabrooks and David Elman. With new methods of induction, new concepts as to what hypnosis is, and sophisticated interventions, hypnosis could emerge as a psychotherapeutic science. The approaches of these three gentlemen could not have been more different, but each defined a piece of hypnosis and a specific induction method ideal for particular types of patients. Erickson pioneered a permissive approach to hypnosis using exquisite details of language patterns to lead patients into an inward focused state which he developed into trance. Estabrooks championed a highly authoritative approach still useful with individuals more rigid personality characteristics. Elman fashioned an induction pattern which leads to deep levels of trance reliably in less than three minutes so that the therapeutic time could focus on inner work rather than trance depth. Teaching the client to utilize these techniques on their own through self-hypnosis both gives them the power to control their inner states, but also gives them tools for relaxation, improved sleep, improved habit control and reduction of anxiety related symptoms. As we move into this next century, it is time to reconsider hypnosis as a tool for the psychiatrist, psychologist and psychotherapist.

Biography

Gregory P Brown has completed his BA in Psychology from Oberlin College, followed by Medical School at the University of Arkansas. He has obtained his Postgraduate training in General Psychiatry at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia followed by Fellowship training in Forensic Psychiatry at the University of Rochester. He is presently an Associate Professor at the University of Nevada, School of Medicine, where he is also the Program Director for the Psychiatry Residency Training Program in Las Vegas. He is board certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in the fields of Psychiatry and Forensic Psychiatry. His other professional focus is on forensic psychiatry. His interests range from models of psychotherapy and the mind to hypnosis, meditation and concepts of creativity.

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