

The Practitioner's Guide to

MIRRORING HANDS

A Client-Responsive Therapy
That Facilitates Natural Problem-Solving
and Mind-Body Healing

Richard Hill and Ernest L. Rossi



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Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
Foreword	xi
Introduction	1
1. The History of Mirroring Hands: Ernest Rossi in Conversation with Richard Hill	11
2. Thinking <i>IN</i> the Systems of Life: Preparing the Therapeutic Mind	27
3. Unlocking Natural Connections: How We Begin.	43
4. Language Principles: Client-Responsive Language	55
5. The Rhythms and Cycles of Life in Therapy: The Natural Foundations of Mirroring Hands	73
6. What Is and What Can Be: Internal Review	95
7. Natural, Comfortable, and Sensitive Observation: The Art of Client-Responsive Therapy .	107
8. Holding Both Sides of the Mirror: Revealing Potential and Possibility	123
9. Curiosity and the Elephant in the Room: What We Miss.	137
10. Clearing Out the Negative, Preparing for the Positive: Closing the Door	153
11. Symptom Scaling for Enlightenment: The Symptom is a Message	167
12. Improvising, Drama, and Mirroring Hands: The Flow of Client-Responsive Therapy.	181
13. Personal Access to Your Growing Edge: Solo and Personal Use of Mirroring Hands	191
14. Research and Experiments: From Ravitz to Rossi	205
15. Down the Rabbit Hole: Quantum and the Yet-To-Be-Known.	221
<i>Appendix A. The Nuntius Nuclei: A New Neuroscience for Curiosity</i>	231
<i>Appendix B. An Integrated Quantum Field Theory of Physics, Math, Biology, and Psychology</i>	239
<i>References</i>	269
<i>Index</i>	287

Foreword



Ernest Rossi has been a seminal contributor to and a historical figure in the evolution of psychotherapy. He is blessed to have Richard Hill as a collaborator.

Rossi has contributed in many professional arenas, including advancing Jungian perspectives and the work of Milton H. Erickson, M.D., who was the dean of 20th century medical hypnosis. Rossi was Erickson's Boswell and the person who was primary in making Erickson's work available to the world. But Rossi's own groundbreaking contributions have been in psycho-neuro-biology. He pioneered the use of hypnotic techniques in mind–body therapy, including the way in which hypnotic suggestion alters gene expression. How the mind creates the brain and the body is a door that Rossi has unlocked so that other investigators can enter and explore.

Contributions to hypnosis have also been central to Rossi's work. He is a specialist in ideodynamic activity – the way in which associations and mental representations alter behavior and sensory experience. When you think vividly about a lemon, you salivate. If you're a passenger in a car, and you want it to stop quickly, you stomp on the imaginary brake. These ideodynamic principles can guide psychotherapy and are the foundation of this important book.

Rossi invented the Mirroring Hands technique, which can be used both for hypnotic induction and hypnotherapy. The protocol and accompanying theory are presented and enriched with clear clinical examples. Variations are explained and limitations are offered. Therapists who want to advance their technique can now learn from a psychotherapeutic master.

Richard Hill is a co-author, not merely an expositor. He expounds on the importance of curiosity as a palliative factor and enriches perspectives on using the brain to alter the body. Orientations are developed to aid clinicians to avoid burnout.

Not only is this book an important resource for those who practice hypnosis, it can also be an important introduction for any psychotherapist who wants to learn about mind–body therapy. This manual provides keys to the solutions to problems that have previously evaded psychotherapeutic technique.

Ernest Rossi and Richard Hill are to be commended for their vibrant exposition. They have cleared previous undergrowth and created a path that others will be wise to follow.

Jeffrey K. Zeig, Ph.D.
Milton H. Erickson Foundation

Introduction

Richard Hill Meets Ernest Rossi

I first saw Ernest Rossi demonstrate Mirroring Hands in December 2005. My reaction to Dr. Rossi's undeniable intellect and broad ranging ideas was to be, simply, blown away. I knew this was a turning point, a phase shift, in my life. There had to be a reason why I had flown 7,500 miles to attend the Evolution of Psychotherapy conference. I did not ever imagine I was embarking on a journey that would lead to a decade long engagement with Ernest Rossi, culminating in this book.

But things happen, and they have a way of telling you what you need to know. Sometimes you notice quickly and easily, other times you need to be smacked in the face more than once before it all falls into place. So, what were the smacks in my face? Frankly, there have been quite a few over the past decade. Let me share an experience from a few years ago which absolutely convinced me why I was so drawn to Mirroring Hands. I hope that in describing a case, you can more easily "walk in my shoes" for a while.

RH's Casebook: A "Walk-In"

I answered an unexpected knock on the door of my clinic. A woman in her mid to late thirties asked if I could see her straight away. That is a little unusual but, as it happened, I was available and I invited her in. She spoke quickly and had a way of gazing intently that was a little unnerving, but I didn't feel she was psychotic, just intense. In something of a machine-gun delivery she set up the conditions for the session.

Your sign says counseling and brain training. I don't know what brain training is. (She didn't pause for an explanation.) I've just come from seeing another psychiatrist. In fact, I've seen a lot of different therapists, had just about every therapy ... and read everything. You reckon you can do something different? I'll give you 60 minutes.

Well, it was nothing if not a challenge, and so we began. She sat down and I went through my standard intake process. She wasn't all that keen on telling her story in detail, again, to another therapist.

Then she looked at her watch:

You have 45 minutes left.

No pressure! In the tradition of Milton H. Erickson, I was looking for her to show me some clues as to how to proceed.¹ She had been clear so far: don't do any of the standard treatments. She almost seemed to be saying, don't treat me at all. Wow! This was such a unique experience and, to be honest, I really didn't know what to do. So I watched her. She was very expressive with her hands, pushing them toward me to highlight things as she spoke. I was suddenly transported to my workshops with Ernest Rossi. This looked something like what happens during a Mirroring Hands experience. I took the gamble that no other therapist had used this technique with her.

I'm noticing that you are very expressive with your hands. Have you ever really looked at your hands ... noticed what is really interesting about them?

She was surprisingly cooperative and stared at her hands for about 30 seconds, then flicked her gaze back to me.

What are you doing?

Well, she had basically told me that she didn't think much of what therapists thought. She was also sick and tired of them forcing different therapies down her throat. Feigning a surprised confusion, I replied:

I don't know, but you said you'd done everything. So ... have you ever done anything like this before?

She stared intently at me for a moment, looked at her watch and told me as a matter of fact:

You have 35 minutes.

I began to facilitate Mirroring Hands. We will learn the details of the procedure later in the book, but, suffice it to say, as the experience unfolded, she told me, with some surprise, that she felt her hands were representing two aspects of her persona. One hand was representing a part of herself she keeps private and the other hand was representing her public face. It was like watching someone open doors to rooms she had not seen for a long time. Sometimes she shared what was happening and other times she just explored her "rooms" privately. Many things happened over the next 30

¹ Erickson, M. H. (2008). *The Collected Works of Milton H. Erickson, M.D.* Vol. 1: *The Nature of Therapeutic Hypnosis*, ed. E. L. Rossi, R. Erickson-Klein & K. L. Rossi. Phoenix, AZ: Milton H. Erickson Foundation Press, p. xii.

minutes that are not vital to replay here, but finally her hands settled together, with her “public self” hand totally covering her “private self” hand.

She was quiet for a little while, then looked up. Her eyes had softened their intense gaze. Her voice was slower and more contemplative. It was clear that she knew something now that she did not know 30 minutes ago. Over the next 15 minutes – yes, she stayed beyond her 60 minute deadline – she told me how she had created this “public self” as a protector against early family difficulties. Now she knew why she felt so frustrated and had resisted previous therapy. Everyone was trying to “fix” her public face, but that was her protector. To take away her protector would be disastrous for her private self.

After all those years of therapy, when she had only allowed people to see her *protector self*, today she had allowed her hands to become mirrors into her deeper self. In this Mirroring Hands experience she was able explore “rooms” that were usually locked or avoided. She was able to tend to her vulnerable “private” self and begin the process of letting her protective “guardian” self take a well-earned rest. The most amazing thing is that she did the bulk of this work without my interference, imposition, or direction. She found what she was searching for: how to begin her own healing. I expect she might say that was 60 minutes that truly changed her life. Equally, that was 60 minutes that truly set my sails.

What Is This Book About?

We will show how to create and facilitate therapeutic experiences like this, utilizing the Mirroring Hands technique. We will also show how to integrate our therapeutic approach across all therapies, and even into daily life. The woman found natural “inner” and “between” connections on numerous levels that literally changed her psycho-neuro-biology. The realizations and changes that happened to her indicate a variety of implicit activities, including brain plasticity and neural integrations, cognitive perceptions entering and altering conscious awareness, the necessary gene expression and protein synthesis to enable these processes, and the possibility of epigenetic changes to her DNA.² On the observable level, she clearly experienced new thoughts and a deeper self-understanding. It was evident that she had connected with her own capacities for problem-solving and was ready to begin her own healing. We will describe and show how Mirroring Hands is conducted, but equally, if not more importantly, we will explore the framework of knowledge and understanding that surrounds and supports the process. We have differentiated seven variations of Mirroring Hands. These are punctuated with chapters that reveal different aspects of the surrounding and supporting framework. The

2 Rossi, E. L., Iannotti, S., Cozzolino, M., Castiglione, S., Cicatelli, A., & Rossi, K. L. (2008). A pilot study of positive expectations and focused attention via a new protocol for optimizing therapeutic hypnosis and psychotherapy assessed with DNA microarrays: the creative psychosocial genomic healing experience. *Sleep and Hypnosis*, 10(2), 39–44; Simpkins, C. A. & Simpkins, A. M. (2010). *Neuro-Hypnosis: Using Self-Hypnosis to Activate the Brain for Change*. New York: W.W. Norton.

complete picture gradually emerges over the course of the book as we guide you around the activities of the technique and into the foundational frameworks of the Mirroring Hands approach.

When, Where, and Why?

It is important to clarify at the very beginning that we are not presenting Mirroring Hands as *the therapy* for everything and everyone. It is not a magic bullet, any more than is any other therapy. In fact, current research is concluding that no one therapy is necessarily more effective than any other.³ As if to confuse and confound, practitioners know from their personal cases that a particular therapy *can* be much more successful with a particular client. Equally, with another client, a different therapy is more effective. The conundrum is resolved when we position the client as central to the therapeutic process, when the experience and efficacy of the therapist and the therapies they utilize are taken into account, and when there is a comfortable and collaborative relationship between the therapist and the client (the therapeutic alliance).⁴ A pragmatic definition of *evidence based practice* has created a pressure toward determining preferable therapies or perhaps permissible therapies that *should* be applied to clients only by available, research based evidence. This appears to be a growing construct in agencies, insurance funded therapies and other funded institutions, as well as many educational institutions. Although we appreciate the responsibility to produce predictably successful outcomes, we feel that these limiting determinations are not the right path to follow.

You may be surprised that the American Psychological Association's Presidential Task Force produced and published a formal definition in 2006 that is not evidence centric: "Evidence-based practice in psychology (EBPP) is the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences."⁵ It is quite clear that the *client* is the context, and the therapy, intervention, or technique utilized is only one part of an integration of reliable practice, practitioner expertise, and how the client responds. A client centered approach is hardly new. It was first introduced by Carl Rogers in the latter half of the 20th

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- 3 Wampold, B., Flückiger, C., Del Re, A., Yulish, N., Frost, N., Pace, B. et al. (2016). In pursuit of truth: a critical examination of meta-analyses of cognitive behavior therapy. *Psychotherapy Research*, 27(1), 14–32; Connolly Gibbons, M. B., Mack, R., Lee, J., Gallop, R., Thompson, D., Burock, D. & Crits-Christoph, P. (2014). Comparative effectiveness of cognitive and dynamic therapies for major depressive disorder in a community mental health setting: study protocol for a randomized non-inferiority trial. *BMC Psychology*, 2(1), 47.
 - 4 Ardito, R. B. & Rabellino, D. (2011). Therapeutic alliance and outcome of psychotherapy: historical excursus, measurements, and prospects for research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2, 270; Miller, S. D., Hubble, M. A., Chow, D. L. & Seidel, J. A. (2013). The outcome of psychotherapy: yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Psychotherapy*, 50(1), 88–97.
 - 5 American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice (2006). Evidence-based practice in psychology. *American Psychology*, 61(4), 271–285 at 273.

century.⁶ We suggest that it is possible to create an even deeper degree of engagement with the client in their pursuit of effective therapy by asking the therapist to take one more step back from the client once they are “centered,” and allow the therapy to emerge in a *client-responsive* way. So, the answer to *when*, *where*, and *why* is much more about the client than it is about prescribed or usual treatment and predetermined therapeutic programs or plans. Again, it is important to qualify this by acknowledging that there are times when a therapist *needs* to do much of the work and perhaps impose a therapeutic program on a particular client. On close examination, however, even those situations can be seen as client-responsive because the client is showing they need help to get to a place where they can start to work for themselves.

Mirroring Hands is introduced at the best time, in the best place, and with the best intention – when, where, and why – in response to the client’s indications of need. We suggest this is possible for all therapy because the best therapy *emerges* from the interaction between the client and the therapist.⁷ It is, therefore, not our desire to predetermine the conditions in which you should utilize Mirroring Hands, but, having said that, we would like to give some guidance based on our experience.

When You Just Don’t Know

Mirroring Hands is often utilized to break through the impasse of the client’s “I don’t know” or even “We don’t know,” when both client *and* therapist are unsure. You saw this dual “not knowing” in the case at the beginning of this introduction. Admittedly, this is why people come to therapy – because they don’t know what to do or they don’t know what their problem is really all about. Sometimes clients talk of a feeling that they know there is something to know, but that knowledge just can’t be reached or there is something blocking access to it.

Regardless of the techniques or processes that emerge during a session, the first task is always to create and build the therapeutic alliance.⁸ This often starts with talking things through. This is a very familiar beginning for most therapists. This conversation largely comes from *explicit awareness*, where both client and therapist can verbalize or, in some other way, consciously express what they are thinking or feeling. Establishing and building an interpersonal rapport is essential to earn the

6 Rogers, C. R. (1957a). A note on the “nature of man.” *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 4(3), 199–203; Rogers, C. R. (2007). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 44(3), 240–248.

7 Stiles, W. B., Honos-Webb, L. and Surko, M. (1998). Responsiveness in psychotherapy. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 5, 439–458; Hatcher, R. L. (2015). Interpersonal competencies: responsiveness, technique, and training in psychotherapy. *American Psychologist*, 70(8), 747–757.

8 Lambert, M. J. & Barley, D. E. (2001). Research summary on the therapeutic relationship and psychotherapy outcome. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 38(4), 357–361.

trust of the client and for the client to feel safe. From trust and safety, it is possible to deal with the issue that has moved the client to come for therapy.

Beneath conscious control there is an inner, implicit world which does not have direct access to vocalization or consciously directed behavior. It is hidden, elusive, and abstract. Memories and feeling that are too difficult to bear are often “purposefully” hidden in the implicit, inner world. Behaviors and emotions can appear on the surface almost as if arising from somewhere unknown. These are usually called symptoms, but, equally, they are how the implicit makes itself known in the explicit. Symptoms create feelings of disconnection and disintegration, creating a disharmony that triggers a client to seek therapy. Mirroring Hands is a *natural* and *responsive* way to enable the client to repair those connections. We will show how this can be done safely and with natural comfort, even when the therapeutic experience is difficult and testing.

Exactly how therapy proceeds depends on what the client is able to do, is expecting to do, and is prepared to do. It can also depend on what the client knows about you and your practice. Clients who have come specifically for Mirroring Hands might want to start with that process almost straight away. That doesn't mean that we always do. We still work carefully with *all* the messages coming from the client. We discuss this sensitivity of the therapist to the client's many levels of communication in Chapter 7 (Natural, Comfortable, and Sensitive Observation).

Although we describe a number of variations, Mirroring Hands can be utilized in countless ways. The interplay between client and therapist creates whatever is needed in that moment. We discuss this in Chapter 12 (Improvising, Drama, and Mirroring Hands). Improvising is, fundamentally, the unplanned utilization of your knowledge base and skill set. The exact therapeutic experience that emerges is the hallmark of the artisan nature of psychotherapy.⁹ Think of a pianist who shifts away from the predetermined melody and begins to improvise. The musical notes that emerge are qualities from the musician's skills, experience, and expertise, as well as the interplay with other musicians, the audience, and the marvels of the player's own imagination. A poorly educated, technically weak, or inexperienced player is simply not able to improvise as well. This is a capacity that develops over time. Because we want each therapist to add their own unique qualities to their Mirroring Hands experience, we strongly encourage and highlight the importance of learning all that interests you. *We really want you to be interested.* We also encourage you to seek feedback about your work through regular supervision, and regularly ask your client what is working well for them.¹⁰ We will explore different ways that you can receive client feedback, and check on therapeutic effectiveness, as we work through the variations and some of our case examples. We hope this brings you, as a practitioner, confidence and comfort in your ability to flow within and around all your possibilities. Surely that is why the client has sought to bring you into their experience!

9 Schore, A. N. (2012). *The Science of the Art of Psychotherapy*. New York: W.W. Norton; Storr, A. & Holmes, J. (2012). *The Art of Psychotherapy*, 3rd rev. edn. London: Taylor & Francis.

10 Miller, S. D., Duncan, B. L., Brown, J., Sorrell, R. & Chalk, M. B. (2006). Using formal client feedback to improve retention and outcome: making ongoing, real-time assessment feasible. *Journal of Brief Therapy*, 5(1), 5–22.

Where Do We Begin?

It is not unusual to begin a book with a historical reflection and evaluation. In that tradition, our first chapter explores the history of mirroring hands and how the approach emerged from psychotherapy, therapeutic hypnosis, and Ernest Rossi's years with Milton H. Erickson. It is unusual, however, to have access to a central player in that history. Chapter 1 (The History of Mirroring Hands) reproduces an interview, a conversation really, between Ernest Rossi and Richard Hill. You will find that the conversation introduces information that has never been revealed before, and also challenges some of the established ways in which psychotherapy is approached, and our personal approach to health and well-being.

That conversation sets up the first challenge which is addressed in Chapter 2 (Thinking *IN* the Systems of Life). We begin our exploration with a fresh look at how we think. We have an educational tradition of logic based around the principle of cause and effect, but the reality of the world in which we live is somewhat different. This chapter explores the wonders and seemingly mysterious processes that occur in systems, complexity, and chaos. Complexity theory is, simply, a way of explaining what happens when many things make connections, interact, integrate, and produce outcomes. At any given moment, most of us can see that we are involved and engaged with all kinds of influences and it is hard to know exactly what is going to happen. It would be great if things were as simple as one cause and one predictable outcome, but our life experience tells us it is more unpredictable than that.

The very latest brain research occurring as part of the Brain Initiative, launched by President Obama in 2013 in the United States, is shifting research focus from individual brain components and processing mechanisms to looking at the brain as a complex system that shifts and changes as a function of energy and information flow.¹¹ As you work through the book, you will see we also seek to create a shift away from the way we have been taught to think. Rather than being the therapist who sits with but outside the client, introducing interventions that will produce a resolution, we will show you how it is possible to be a therapist who enters into a *therapeutic system with the client*. We will show how being *in* the system (instead of acting *on* the system) produces a very different engagement with the client. The therapist naturally becomes client-responsive, and the client is able to shift from *following* the therapist to being in the center of the therapeutic process. The client becomes the source of their own therapeutic change.¹²

11 See: <https://www.braininitiative.nih.gov/>.

12 Rossi, E. L. (2004b). *A Discourse with Our Genes: The Psychosocial and Cultural Genomics of Therapeutic Hypnosis and Psychotherapy*. San Lorenzo Maggiore: Editris S.A.S.; Scheel, M. J., Davis, C. K. & Henderson, J. D. (2013). Therapist use of client strengths: a qualitative study of positive processes. *Counseling Psychologist*, 41(3), 392-427.

A Framework for All Therapies?

Although we are committed to concepts and principles that are well founded in science, each of the theoretical chapters is not delivered as dry academic theory. These chapters describe and explore what is natural to the practice of all psychotherapy. We hope you will find that you can apply the framework and foundations we set out here for Mirroring Hands to everything you practice, both professionally and in your daily life. These chapters establish how systems function, how they self-organize, and how we can – as practitioners, clients, or private individuals – be comfortable and creative participants in the experience. We are trying to shift thinking away from being the conscious controller or the dominating influence, to embracing a state of participation in the natural qualities of our being that do not need control or domination. Instead, we can participate in a creative integration of our whole system. Our argument is that this very control and domination of the experience can make therapy *less effective* and *harder* for both practitioner and client.¹³ Again, it is important to qualify that we are well aware that sometimes it may be necessary to be pragmatic, controlling, and even dominant, but this is rarely being done as a therapy. This is, most often, to stabilize the client or their situation *before therapy can begin*.

This book is largely addressing situations that are receptive to therapy. Having said that, you will be able to apply the knowledge about our natural rhythms and cycles to the most difficult of cases. You may discover wider applications when we explore the deeper elements of curiosity, what turns it on and what might be turning it off, in Chapter 9 (Curiosity and the Elephant in the Room). Chapter 5 (The Rhythms and Cycles of Life in Therapy) will explain what we mean by natural rhythms and cycles. We believe this puts the practice of psychotherapy in the context of what is natural about us, about the way the world functions around us, and the ways in which we function in the world.

Is There More?

The final two chapters might be considered more like an addendum or appendix, but we feel that we have not finished our guided tour yet. Anyone who has participated in Mirroring Hands has had the felt experience of an energetic difference and shift occurring in the hands. Is this just a cognitive invention or is something really happening? In Chapter 14 (Research and Experiments) we review the research of Leonard Ravitz and our current updates. This fascinating work produces a graphical electrodynamic recording, in real time, of the millivolt changes in the left and right hands.

¹³ Rosenfeld, B. D. (1992). Court ordered treatment of spouse abuse. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 12(2), 205–226; Hopps, J. G., Pinderhughes, E. & Shankar, R. (1995). *The Power to Care: Clinical Practice Effectiveness with Overwhelmed Clients*. New York: Free Press.

The recordings show not only the energetic changes, but also that there is a difference between the left and right sides. Having established that these are energetic processes which occur at the micro-particle level, we have opened the door to quantum field theory. We feel incumbent to provide a sketch, at least, of this fascinating topic to give you some foundation and open your curiosity to seek out more detailed information elsewhere. In Chapter 15 (Down the Rabbit Hole), we explore the quantum world and also speculate on what the future might hold. Finally, we have kept the hard science for two special papers, added as appendices, in which you can dive as deeply as you wish.

The Creative, Growing Edge

We conclude this introduction as we began, with a personal perspective from Richard Hill:

Despite my great good fortune and privilege of being mentored by Ernest Rossi, it has always been about where the experience takes me – how I change, where I grow. This book is an expression of what has emerged over the past decade of exploring new ideas and techniques with Ernest Rossi. Something certainly began on that auspicious day in December 2005, but the burden of responsibility for my development, however, has always been mine. It was my task to create effective and productive growth at the most exciting region of my being – my growing edge.¹⁴

The growing edge is the edge of your known space, your known capacities, your known comfortable-ness. From the growing edge you step into a creative space where everything is new and unknown. When you step out it is not a rupture or disconnection from who and what you are. It is just as it sounds – a point of growth. Always keep in your mind that you remain connected to everything *you are*. This adventure is growth into a space where you become more – more than you are right now. I (RH) am still expanding at my growing edge and Ernest Rossi tells me that, even in his mid-eighties, he also continues to push outward at his growing edge.

The creative, growing edge can be a difficult place to be. By its nature, you are there on your own. Even though you may be supported on many fronts, cheered on and encouraged, it is an unknown space. Our unique expression of what we learn, and the way we integrate that learning into daily life, is our expansion at our growing edge. Every therapeutic technique, process, and protocol is the expression of someone's movement outward at *their* creative growing edge. In this context, there is no therapy, technique, or process that is ever entirely a perfect fit for you, because they have all been created at someone else's growing edge. Some may well be a close fit, but this is why *Ericksonian psychotherapy* is so hard to reproduce exactly, because the only perfect Ericksonian practitioner was

14 Rossi, E. L. (1992). The wave nature of consciousness. In J. K. Zeig (Ed.), *The Evolution of Psychotherapy: The Second Conference*, 216–238. New York: Routledge.

Erickson himself. We each must find our own best form and expression in order to be natural, comfortable, and unburdened as we practice.

We genuinely wonder where you will take this. What you might do with our words and ideas. How this book might enable, encourage, or inspire you to explore *your* growing edge. What will you create? It may be something very small. It may be a radical diversion. Chapter 9 (Curiosity and the Elephant in the Room) developed out of Richard Hill's years with Ernest Rossi, but also out of his own life. What does this say to *you*? What do you have in your mind that may spill out beyond your growing edge? The intention of this book is to show you how we have done it, so that you can explore how you will do it.

One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight, for a very long time, of the shore.

André Gide, *Les faux-monnayeurs* [The Counterfeiters] (1925)

To get to where we are now, however, there has already been a journey. It is natural to wonder about the history, about how things changed, and how they grew. It is natural, therefore, to begin this book with a historic review, and we are able to tap into the source, Ernest Rossi himself. Let's ask him how it all began.

The History of Mirroring Hands

Ernest Rossi in Conversation with Richard Hill



Figure 1.1. Richard Hill and Ernest Rossi in conversation, June 2016

In June 2016, I met with Ernest Rossi and his wife, Kathryn Rossi, at their home in California. The main reason for the visit was to explore the writing of this book. We met every day over seven days, recording over 25 hours of interviews and conversations. In the second session on day 1 of my week with the Rossis, I asked Ernest Rossi, “What is the history of the Mirroring Hands approach? How did it emerge from your ‘apprenticeship’ with Milton Erickson?” I have reproduced the bulk of the answer. The transcript has been edited for clarity and some additional commentary has been added. *Italicized* words indicate emphasis.

In this transcript, and throughout the book, Richard Hill is represented by RH and Ernest Rossi by ER.

From the Rossi/Hill Conversations, 2016

Los Osos, California, June 1, 2016, 2pm

RH: Maybe this is the opportunity, what do you think, in among all the questions that I have, one was, really, to hear from you about the emergence of this Mirroring Hands approach.

ER: Oh ... what's the essence, profoundly the essence ...

RH: Yes!

ER: I remember once being introduced from the lectern, "And now Ernie Rossi will show his approach with the hands" (we laugh). Isn't that silly?

RH: And that was ... that?

ER: I think, "He doesn't get it." So, what doesn't he get? We have two sides ... you know all this stuff about the left and right hemisphere? It's all true from the quantum field theory perspective of consciousness and cognition, empathy, personality, brain plasticity, molecules, and gene expression. all the way down to the quantum level. It's built in here (ER indicates his head).

RH: Yes, I'm very familiar with much of that ...

(ER pauses as he contemplates where to begin.)

ER: I was with Milton Erickson many times when David Cheek was there, so it was a three-way conversation between us ... just like I was there many times when Ravitz was there ... and I learned in these informal shop-talk dialogues a lot that the public's perception of therapeutic hypnosis seemed to have no appreciation of ...

* * *

Erickson might reasonably be considered one of the major thinkers about modern psychotherapy and therapeutic hypnosis. He qualified as a psychiatrist in the 1920s and conducted extensive research in the field of therapeutic hypnosis. The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, led by Jeffrey Zeig, Ph.D., continues the legacy of Erickson through education, a huge archive, and the organization of an annual conference to celebrate his work and the ongoing evolution of psychotherapy.¹ Erickson's publications are best recorded in the 16 volumes of *The Collected Works of Milton H. Erickson, M.D.* (2008–2015) edited by Ernest Rossi, Kathryn Rossi, and Roxanna Erickson-Klein.² He was a master teacher. The people who spent time with him, learned from him, and developed their work in association with him are a "who's who" of modern psychotherapy.

1 See: <http://www.erickson-foundation.org/>.

2 Erickson, M. H. (2008–2015). *The Collected Works of Milton H. Erickson, M.D.*, ed. E. L. Rossi, R. Erickson-Klein & K. L. Rossi, 16 vols. Phoenix, AZ: Milton H. Erickson Foundation Press.

Mirroring Hands is a practical therapeutic technique that can be utilized by all practitioners for the benefit of their clients.

With a tranquil state of focused attention as the starting point, the practitioner invites the client to explore an issue by projecting it into their hands – with one hand representing the difficulty or disturbance, the other becomes a natural container for resolution and comfort.

In this instructive and illuminating manual, Richard Hill and Ernest L. Rossi show you how *Mirroring Hands* enables clients to unlock their natural problem-solving and mind–body healing capacities to arrive at a resolution in a way that many other therapies might not. Delving further into the technique and its origins, Hill and Rossi punctuate their detailed description of how *Mirroring Hands* is conducted with insightful exploration of the framework of knowledge and understanding that surrounds and supports the process.

An ideal progression for those engaged in mindfulness and meditation, this practitioner’s guide is the first book on the subject specially written for all mental health practitioners and is suitable for students of counseling, psychotherapy, psychology, and hypnotherapy, as well as anyone in professional practice.

In many ways *The Practitioner’s Guide to Mirroring Hands* sets a new standard for texts in psychobiological care. I will buy copies as gifts and will cite and recommend it whenever I teach.

Laurence Irwin Sugarman, M.D., Research Professor and Director, Center for Applied Psychophysiology and Self-regulation (CAPS), author of *Therapeutic Hypnosis with Children and Adolescents*

The *Mirroring Hands* approach is an elegant, rapid, and effective way to guide a client to meaningful changes.

Professor Emeritus Rubin Battino, Wright State University, author of *When All Else Fails, Expectation, and Healing Language*

Therapists would do well to read *The Practitioner’s Guide to Mirroring Hands* and expand their views on the ways in which the client’s inner resources can be mobilized in the service of change.

Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and author of *The Discriminating Therapist and Trancework (4th edition)*

The *Mirroring Hands* technique can be extremely useful. Kudos to Richard Hill and Ernest L. Rossi for providing such an excellent guide to its use and application.

Michael F. Hoyt, Ph.D., author/editor of *Brief Therapy and Beyond, Capturing the Moment, Brief Therapy, and Therapist Stories of Inspiration, Passion, and Renewal*

Richard Hill, M.A., M.Ed., M.B.M.Sc., D.P.C., is acknowledged internationally as an expert in human dynamics, communication, the brain, and the mind. He is an international lecturer and keynote speaker on the topics of neuroscience and psychosocial genomics, has developed special training courses for suicide prevention, and is the originator of the Curiosity Approach. As well as giving lectures to the psychological profession in Australia and the rest of the world, Richard has a strong ongoing engagement with the coaching and business community.

Ernest L. Rossi, Ph.D., holds a diploma in clinical psychology and is the recipient of three lifetime achievement awards for outstanding contributions to the field of psychotherapy. He is a Jungian analyst, the science editor of *Psychological Perspectives*, and the author, co-author, or editor of more than 50 professional books and more than 170 peer-reviewed scientific papers in the areas of neuroscience, psychotherapy, dreams, and therapeutic hypnosis, many of which have been translated into a dozen languages. Ernest is internationally recognized as a polymath, a gifted psychotherapist, and a teacher of innovative approaches to facilitating the creative process.

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