

Hypnosis, Ericksonian Hypnotherapy, and Aikido

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Several key Ericksonian concepts find cross-cultural validation and practical application in the Japanese martial art of Aikido. The Aikido psychophysiological state of *centering* shares several important attributes with the trance state, particularly in the relational aspects of shared trance. In Aikido methodology for dealing with others, *blending* is an almost exact parallel to Ericksonian utilization. The Aikido view of resistance offers an increased understanding of strategic/Ericksonian approaches. Therapist training may be enhanced by combining Aikido principles with traditional methods.

The genius of Milton Erickson and his contributions to hypnosis and psychotherapy have been validated in many ways and from many diverse sources. From a childhood marred by illness and disability, Erickson pursued a medical career and used his limited mobility to develop an extraordinarily keen sense of observation. Drawing on his observed knowledge, he developed the utilization approach. He expanded treatment methods with pattern-

interruption techniques and by his creative application of both client and therapist trance within the therapeutic interaction. These methods of resolving intrapsychic conflicts have close parallels with methods of an entirely unrelated system of solving conflicts: the martial art of Aikido.

The creator of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1968), also had a weak and sickly childhood. He recovered to spend over half a century studying the ways of the warrior in Japan. The fruits of his labors he distilled into a new martial art: Aikido, (*AI* = harmony; *KI* = life energy; *DO* = path), or way of training (literally, the way of harmony with universal life energy), a powerful, effective, and nonviolent method of self-defense and resolution of conflict.

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