

# “How I Became Ernie Rossi”

## An Interview with Ernest Rossi, Ph.D.

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*by Michael Yapko, Ph.D. (1990)*

Ernest L. Rossi (Ph.D., 1962, Temple University) is in private practice in Los Angeles, California. He is the author of two books, one on dreams and one on the psychobiology of mind-body healing. Rossi has extensive experience as a Jungian analyst and has served on the certifying board of the C.G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles.

He has written prolifically on the hypnotic approach of Milton H. Erickson MD and is the co-author, with Dr. Erickson, of four books. Additionally, Rossi edited four volumes of Erickson’s collected papers and co-edited two volumes of Erickson’s early lectures. He is editor of *Psychological Perspectives: A Semi-annual Review of Jungian Thought*.

YAPKO: Please share some information about your childhood, your evolving interest in therapy, and basically a *Reader’s Digest* version of how you got to where you are now.

ROSSI: I was born March 26, 1933, at the end of “The Great USA Depression.” My father was a carpenter out of work. He was also sometimes a salesman. My grandfather, who is my namesake Ernest, first came to this country from Italy; he couldn’t read or write. He was a day laborer digging the subways in New York City. A tragedy happened when I was only about three or four years old—he had a stroke. From his stroke he was permanently handicapped in a wheelchair. So, the rest of the family had to go to work. Suddenly I was left alone with grandpa who was my first babysitter, who was mostly paralyzed, sitting in a chair. I was like a little monkey—he would tell me to go and fetch him a glass of water and such things.

It worked out very nicely, except he would complain to the family about me sometimes at Sunday dinner, saying “But Little Ernie always escapes.” That was because every once in a while I would become a pioneer—walk out of the house, and run across the street to the “new land;” to new, deep, profound explorations of vacant lots and backyards. So, I think exploration is very deep in my nature. Did my early association with my grandfather who was my first babysitter and my namesake set a life pattern for me that led to my association with Erickson in a wheelchair during the last eight years of his life?

When I was seven years old, I began working for a shoe repairman, Patsy. He too was an older fellow. So, I began learning the shoe repair trade. I worked there for about seven or eight years, every day after school and on weekends. Even today, if it comes to a revolution in which I’m stripped of my degrees, I’ll be able to fix your shoes! I’m

well grounded; I know how to take care of your shoes as well as my own. From the tips I got as a shoeshine boy I saved up enough to buy myself a chemistry set. But I lied to my parents and told them that Patsy, the old shoe repair man bought it for me. Otherwise I thought that my parents would think it was too dangerous and take it away from me. That chemistry set led me into the wonders of science in my home lab. That absorbed me more than my regular school classes.

When I finally got to high school, I was never a very good student—only “C’s.” I was a very indifferent student in class. Part of it was because I had to work all the time, but mostly it was because I had come from an illiterate family. I was lost in fantasy a lot. But, I did a lot of studying on my own. When it came time to take college entrance exams no one expected to go to college. My parents happened to be visiting Italy, so I borrowed \$50 from my grandfather and took the college boards. I did so well I got a little tuition scholarship that allowed me to go to pharmacy school. That’s how I escaped, so to speak, into the world of higher education.

I did very well as a college undergraduate, but I felt inadequate socially, so I thought I could compensate by leaving the world of science and going into literature. I was very advanced in science; so very often I didn’t have to study. For a few years, I spent all my days in college reading Galsworthy, Balzac, all the great French novels, and all the classical literature. I would spend all day long just reading in my bed. They’d say, “Hey, there’s an exam on such and such date ...” and I’d just go and take it! I’d do well enough to get an “A” or a “B” because I had this rich background of self-study in science since my high school days. When it came time to graduate, I decided I really wanted to go into graduate school, so I got some scholarships. In pharmacy school pharmacognosy [the study of drug plants] was my specialty.

YAPKO: So, in some ways it’s sort of a full circle for you to come back to biology as a primary interest. At one point, though, you left that biological realm and got into psychology. Will you talk about that transition?

ROSSI: I finally got to graduate school and lived my dream of science. For my Masters degree I was doing laboratory research on the biogenesis of the hyocyanine alkaloids. At the same time I did chemical analysis in the agriculture department to support my little scholarship. But I found out I was kind of neurotic — I wasn’t dating. One day someone gave me a copy of Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and that was an incredible revolution in my thinking.

Suddenly, I saw psychology as a kind of *mental chemistry*. I stayed up for three days and three nights and I was so excited about the idea of mental chemistry that I literally couldn’t sleep. I was so absorbed in reading this book and the excitement of this whole new world, because it combined literature and the humanities with my inherent interest in biology and molecules. So, I switched to psychology. I got my master’s

degree and spent a year at the V. A. determining whether or not I really wanted to go on and get a Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

YAPKO: Where was this?

ROSSI: This was the V.A. in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. I stayed there two years supported by a U.S. Public Health Pre-Doctoral Fellowship. That allowed me to live at the hospital with no expense. So, all the money I earned I put into my Freudian analysis five days a week. I really had a lot of stuff to work out, and it worked! I had a wonderful analysis, a classic Freudian analysis, five days a week. Then I got accepted into Temple University in Philadelphia, and while I pursued my Ph.D. in clinical psychology in the daytime, and I secretly studied at the Philadelphia Psychoanalytic Institute at night. I say secretly, because the university doesn't allow you to do that, but I was determined to be a Freudian analyst at the time. So, I was an "Underground Freudian." I studied with an offshoot of the Theodore Reich Group in New York at a branch in Philadelphia.

By the time I got my Ph.D., I was again very lucky. I got a two-year U.S. Public Health Post-Doctoral Fellowship and I had my choice of a number of places to go in the country. I decided to come to California and study with Franz Alexander who was the world leader in psychosomatic medicine at that time. I spent two years studying with Franz Alexander. I was in his last class just before he died. So, I had a very rich background in psychosomatics. But, at that time, I came in contact with a couple of Jungian analysts who were also my supervisors. I thought the Jungian world was a broader, bigger world somehow. I read Jung, Adler, and Karen Horney. I'd go on these reading jags where I'd just read continuously everything these people would write. Otto Rank was also a favorite of mine.

So, I got a very rich background and it usually was by myself in self-study. Usually, I was bored in classes, whether in chemistry or psychology. Most of my best learning was done by myself. The university classes always seemed to be very superficial. So, when I came out and studied with Franz Alexander for two years and discovered the world of Carl Jung, I decided to go into Jungian training. I entered private practice still in Jungian training. As luck would have it, one of my very first clients was a young woman who was referred to me from UCLA Student Health Center. She had incredible dreams; her dreams translated themselves within the dream state itself. Her dreams were like a psychological Rosetta stone. Symbols translated themselves in her dreams. She'd dream an ape was climbing a pole, and then suddenly the ape would turn into her, and she would get an important realization. She had a very rare kind of mind, a kind of lucid dreaming.

I wanted to present that case to the psychoanalytic forum, a circle of analysts. You presented a case to them while you are going through training. But, it was too early in my training program, and they said, "Look, there's plenty of time for that. We don't

want you to make a fool of yourself.” Well, I was really frustrated with that. I said to myself, “Okay, the hell with you guys!” and I wrote my first book instead, *Dreams and the Growth of Personality*. I spent six years studying Davina’s dreams and writing that book. Out of that study, I developed what I felt was a new phenomenological approach to dreams: dreams as an experimental theatre in which we created our identity. That was still a fairly original notion back in the 1960s.

When that book was published, I happened to have an older male client who came to me for psychosexual impotence, and to make a long story short, I learned through my work with Davina to help people go back into the dream and re-dream their dream so that they could experience some of the kinds of growth that Davina would experience in her dreams. In other words, I recommended that clients use their dreams create a stage for new developments in their lives. Well, this old fellow took to it like a duck to water. He closed his eyes and he’d re-dream his dreams with better outcomes and sure enough his symptoms got better.

But a funny thing was at the end of his sessions he would wink at me as he walked out the door. After this happened a few times, I wondered, “What’s going on with this transference?” So, I asked him about it; “You always have that sly little look as you leave. What’s going on here?” He answers, “Oh, I know what you’re really doing.” Oh? What was I really doing? He believed I was doing Ericksonian indirect hypnosis on him, and that I was so slick a hypnotist that I didn’t even use the word. But wow! That false belief really worked for him!

I didn’t tell him I never heard of Erickson! Who was he? Later, this patient gave me a book of Haley’s selection of Erickson’s papers. I took that home and I had the third great crisis of my life; the first was reading Freud’s *Dreams*, the second was discovering Carl Jung, and the third was Erickson. Again, I couldn’t sleep for two or three days! I just stayed up continuously reading those papers over and over. Erickson was doing 20 or 30 years ago what I hoped to be doing 20 or 30 years from now! Finally, after three days of doing nothing but reading, I’m still lying in bed. I’m trying to put the book down. But, I’m trying to finish this one sentence about the confusion technique and trying to understand all of its intricacies. Then all of a sudden I feel this dull pain in my stomach. I finally drop the book and fall into a deep sleep. I woke up about 12 hours later and wonder, “What’s this? I feel like I’ve got a hot poker in my stomach.” Well, I’m not a “psychosomatic” type of person at all, so I go and see a doctor and he says, “What are you doing? You’ve got an acute gastritis. Stop whatever it is you are doing or you’re going to get an ulcer!”

I found out from my client that Erickson was still alive in Phoenix, and now I had a symptom, so I had to get a therapist, right? So I called Milton and told him who I was (actually, I sent him a copy of my dream book, first) and why I was interested in his work. He decided to see me even though he was already in retirement —this was in 1972. I saw him four or five times as a patient. Then around the fourth or fifth time, he

shook his head at the end of the session and he said, “You better not pay Betty (Erickson’s wife, Elizabeth) anymore.”

I usually paid his wife at the end of the session. I said, “Why not?” He said, “You’re not a real patient, are you? You’re really here to learn hypnosis, aren’t you?” He was staring at me with that intensity he was famous for. “I am,” I suddenly wondered? Then I confessed that every time I drove from his home in Phoenix back to my home in Los Angeles (about 8 hours) I was writing papers in my mind with him.

YAPKO: Writing *with* him, did you say?

ROSSI: Yes, in my mind! In other words, I was integrating my concepts, Jungian concepts and Ericksonian concepts. I’d play a game in my mind to better conceptualize things. I’d write a paper in my mind. So, I said “Well, actually, I’m thinking about writing some papers about your work and my work.” He wanted to know what they were. So, I popped out with about a half dozen papers I was writing in my mind. I had no real intention to write them. He nodded his head as if to say he expected as much! He said, “Okay, I want you to write those papers. I just want you to remember one thing: In those papers, I’m going to be the senior author and you’re going to be the junior author, because I am your senior, you know!”

Well, of course he was my senior! So, I did just that. I came back the next week with a paper and read it to him, and he suggested certain changes. So, that’s how we wrote our first two or three papers together. Then I needed to learn more, so I brought a tape recorder. He’d have patients come, old clients he’d call, or professionals who were just passing through Phoenix might happen to call him up and ask to have an appointment with him. He’d say, “Sure. Dr. Rossi’s here, and if you’d let him record, you can have a session because he’s writing a book.” That’s how we began our books together. That’s how *Hypnotic Realities* and those first books came out.

YAPKO: Can I back you up a little bit? Would you describe your first meeting with Erickson and what your impression of him was? Then comment a little bit about what it was like for you as his patient?

ROSSI: I guess like everyone else, I was a little bit surprised. You see this little old man, mostly paralyzed and in a wheelchair, wearing funny purple clothes. I was surprised at the little tiny office he had. You had to be close to him with only a little desk corner between you. He had a little glass paperweight where he had you focus your attention when he began a classical hypnotic induction with eye fixation. The first time I visited him, prominently displayed on his desk, was a copy of my dream book that I had sent him. So, naturally, I said, “Oh, you looked at it. What do you think?”

I’m a proud young author, and it had just come out a few months ago. At the time I really believed it was the most brilliant book since Freud’s *Dreams*. Anyway, I’m hinting

[for a compliment] and he looks at my book as it was the first he'd seen it. He says, "Oh, yes *that*...yes ...well it's a little elementary, don't you think?" Elementary? I thought it was a most sophisticated phenomenological work since Immanuel Kant! But I said, "Well, I guess it *is* elementary!" [Rossi laughs] I don't know if Erickson did that intentionally. He probably did. Where I am *is* elementary compared to where he was. Of course, that's why I'm going to see him, but nonetheless, he always had that little edge. In a sense he was a manipulator. He was very gentle, very loving, so you didn't mind that he was manipulating you.

YAPKO: Why didn't you react angrily or negatively to his statement about your work?

ROSSI: You have to understand my psychology. Erickson was the very archetype of my grandfather, Ernest, who was a very powerful man to whom I was the servant, the helper. But if grandpa got mad, he would get up and stagger across the room and threaten to beat me with his cane that was made out of a broom handle. I would have to hide behind the door or something! Grandpa was handicapped but he was a very powerful, very threatening man. Then, you have to consider all those years with Patsy, the older shoe repairman, who was more kindly, but nonetheless very demanding. I was used to following orders from kindly but demanding grandfather types.

YAPKO: For you this was a transference situation?

ROSSI: Yes, but I never wanted to recognize that. Many times colleagues of Erickson would sit in on our sessions, and afterwards would say, "You know, it's very interesting that he treats you like a son." I'd say, "What do you mean, a son? We're professional colleagues here! I didn't recognize the intensity of the transference until after Milton died. I fell into an ultradian state of lucid state of somnambulism one day (I discuss it in detail in the second edition of my *Dream* book, Brunner/Mazel, 1985). Then it came to me very clearly the connections between my grandfather, Patsy the shoe repairman, the old Professor of Botany who let me take one of his graduate classes when I was an undergraduate, and Franz Alexander. They were all archetypically kindly but demanding grandfather types who somehow motivated me to higher levels of performance than I would have thought possible.

Erickson was just the latest reincarnation of the handicapped grandfather archetype, you might say. So, it's been the pattern of my life to study, be humble, just listen, and be the apprentice. I've been an apprentice all my life. Even now I often feel I'm just an apprentice in relation to my clients. *This is how I became Ernie Rossi: I was a hard working apprentice!* So, when Erickson said my book was elementary, I thought, "Yeah, I guess he's right, it is elementary."

YAPKO: How has that biased your interpretation of Erickson's work?

ROSSI: Let me approach it from a personal point of view. People have asked me, “Of all the students, why did he choose *you* to co-author all these books with and edit his collected papers?” I think the reason that he chose me was that I was just a quiet, eager learner. I think he’d had a lot of back-talk and nonsense from some colleagues who just didn’t understand him. I was used to being just a quiet, hard working humble student. On the other hand, I have my own inner power striving, and my power thing was “Gee, I can get this great guy to teach me if write papers with him. If I write a book with him, he will personally teach me!” So, I guess you can say that that was my counter-manipulation: I’d get a high-class teacher, one of the world’s best teachers, if I did this work with him. I did not particularly give him any problem about his world view. For example, many people—doctors—would come and he would do wonderful therapy with them. Afterward they would explain their therapy from their own point of view and how Erickson’s point of view was actually incorrect, and give Erickson all kinds of nonsense! I never did that.

On the other hand, I think I was very demanding, in a sense, because I was always asking him all kinds of questions, making him explain and giving him challenges: I’d say, “Okay, I’d like you to demonstrate hypnotic amnesia and such and such with this client.” He would try to fulfill all of those challenges, and when he couldn’t, he would at least try to give some rational explanations. Since I was never trying to be a “wise guy,” he could work with me because I was very dutiful, and I was hard-working. I’d spend a week at his home tape-recording the stuff and then I’d go back to my home and I’d get it all typed out. I’d come back the next month and we’d go through the therapy tapes word by word. He appreciated that careful, close attention.

His family even said to me at times, “When you come and spend the week with him, it seems like you give him life, you give him energy. Other times, other people come and it seems like he’s wasted at the end of the day.” I think that was because people wanted to attack but they didn’t know how to attack, because they were coming out with irrelevancies. At least my challenging questions were without my preconceptions coming in. I did have my preconceptions originally as I was following the idea of Jung, expanding consciousness and so forth. But, it was in my second or third session with Erickson when I saw him look at me slyly, and at one point he said, “That’s what you would call growth—synthesis, Ernie.” Enough, I thought. This guy is starting to try to teach me within the framework of my own mind. So, I tried to drop my professional preoccupations. I put my transpersonal humanistic perspective on hold for a while, and I went over to his point of view to assimilate it as best I could. I was always exploring his frame of reference, because I wanted to know what the source of his genius was. In that sense, I’d like to believe I got as close to his point of view as possible.

YAPKO: Okay, let me switch gears. You have received the Milton Erickson Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award, you have published so extensively with and about Erickson, and you are professionally very closely associated with him. In recent years, though, your focus has been the mind/body relationship and the biology of attitudinal

healing. What I would like you to address in a very deliberate and focused way is this question: Why should any psychotherapist reading this interview have any interest in the mind/gene connection?

ROSSI: Because this is his [the therapist's] field, even though he doesn't know it yet! The average psychotherapist is profoundly behind the times. The genius of our age is not in psychotherapy. That genius took place in the 1900s with Freud and Jung. The genius of our age is the molecular biology of the gene. The genius of the 1920's and 1930's was quantum physics. But, the average psychotherapist is hopelessly behind the times from the point of view of modern biology.

Another way of saying the same thing is that every hypnosis journal—the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, the *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*—is hopelessly behind the times. They are not publishing the innovative research in hypnosis. The innovative research in hypnosis is being published by journals in neuroscience, but they don't use the word "hypnosis" written in the title of the papers they publish. They have titles like "Ritualized Relaxation and Lymphocyte Movement," and "Imagery and Monocyte Movement." They are tracing the effects of images and emotional states on white blood cells and molecules, right down to the genetic level.

We now know, for example, that psoriasis is a psychosomatic illness you can sometimes heal with hypnosis. We now know that in psoriasis we can trace the dysfunction down to the molecular gene level. So, the new research is going to show that if you deal with psoriasis on an imagery level, you can show its effects on the molecular. I hope to explore the issue with a group at the Mayo Clinic. When we cure the psoriasis with imagery and hypnosis, do we actually change the messenger RNA? If so, we'll have the first definitive evidence of the mind/gene connection.

So, as far as people identifying themselves as hypnotherapists, they don't know it but they have lost the foundation of their field. Their field has all gone to the molecular/genetic level! A couple of years ago, I tried to get a paper published in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, but they were only willing to publish it if I cut out the stuff about genes and molecules because I had only theoretical speculations but no experimental research to prove it. A national expert who wrote the peer review of my paper wrote, "We in hypnosis are not yet ready to deal with its molecular level."

I did publish the paper later in *Advances*—it's called "The Mind/Molecule Connection." The people publishing our journals don't know that they've lost their own field. The real innovation is on the molecular level and in mind/molecular communication. This is not something that Ernest Rossi invented. Ernie Rossi just put together a scheme of how the whole thing could fit together in a cybernetic network.



YAPKO: Can we put it in context? Address the therapist in a community agency dealing with a woman who's been battered by her husband. Why should the mind/gene connection matter at that point to a therapist conducting treatment?

ROSSI: Why is she battered? What's going on in that person who battered her? That behavior, that rage that leads to battering, do you realize it's a state dependent memory, learning and behavior condition!? When the husband gets into a certain state of stress, do you realize that ACTH stress hormones are flowing through his system and are automatically turning on "battering behavior"? With this knowledge, we can bring the batterer in and help him get some insight as to what are the words, the emotions, and the life triggers that turn on that ACTH. How that whole syndrome that leads to seemingly automatic battering?

If you see a person battering, they're not in a normal state; they are having a state dependent behavioral seizure! They're not behaving rationally! They're in an altered state that's mediated by stress hormones! What are these altered states related to? They're due to the different state dependent memory, learning and behavior systems that are turned on by stress related message molecules. These behaviors are encoded by information substance-hormones, flowing from the body, as well as from the mind.

YAPKO: So, now you're going to induce a trance in order to do what?

ROSSI: I'm developing approaches to help a person get right to that state where he feels like he needs to batter, help him get more familiar with it, and work out the conflict about it. For another case example, consider the McMartin Case. They're calling it now the most expensive case in U.S. history. The big issue is, were these children molested, or not? Well, what happens is that if a child is molested—that's a special case of excitation, ACTH, and sexual hormones are activated, so that the memory of the molestation is now tied to certain hormones. When those hormones are metabolized and his system returns to normal, the child often really doesn't know—was it real or not? So, he says to mommy, "Mommy, did they take off my clothes?" "Did that really happen?" Here's where the child's young ego doesn't really know how to access its own state dependent memories!

YAPKO: What do you mean "when the hormones are metabolized"?

ROSSI: You're in an excited state because you're turned on by certain hormones or information substances. When the state of excitement ends, you may relax or go to sleep. We now know that when the hormones are broken down or metabolized your system returns back to normal. That experience is encoded by those hormones aroused by stress. You know something has happened to you, but the sense of the reality of it is no longer present because the vividness of it requires the hormonal level in your blood to be up to a certain level. Then you go to someone like Erickson who sometimes used very provocative methods when they were appropriate—he didn't try

to put you to sleep or have you relax. He was reactivating your adrenal system so your stress hormone level went up and you could recover your state dependent memory of the original trauma! His so-called hypnosis was actually arousing and reproducing that original stress hormone level so that your memory comes back, and suddenly you recover what really happened.

YAPKO: Now, he wouldn't have described it that way. Would he sanction that kind of explanation?

ROSSI: I think he would have. When I'd ask him, "What is the psycho-neuro-physiological basis of hypnosis?" he would sing me a song: "The foot bone's connected to the ankle bone..." Then, he'd talk about adrenalin and so forth so he had some idea it was connected with physiology. Only now, today, do we have the actual molecular basis of what the geniuses of our field like Erickson always intuited as so. But Erickson did not have the benefit of our modern molecular biology. Now, we have an understanding of the molecular language of the body encodes neurons in the brain in a manner that matches the phenomenology of the mind.

For the first time, we can see a direct translation between imagery, feelings, thoughts, and words that encode stressful life events and how they are tied in with the molecular language of the body. Most psychologists are blissfully unaware of this! They've lost the essential molecular/genomic foundation of their field. I believe all of Erickson's so-called "provocative" techniques, which some people criticize as crossing the border of ethical practice, were actually ways of provoking the patient's mind-body to access the stress encoded molecular language of emotional problems.

It was a brilliant intuitive insight on Erickson's part. He always emphasized to me that to deal with a problem it had to be actively experienced by the patient in the therapy session. He never told anyone to relax—he never programmed anyone, but he sometimes *provoked* people to help them access and deal with their problems.

YAPKO: How would a clinician's practice change by following your approach?

ROSSI: If the clinician became a lot more sensitive to the many mind/body minimal cues that his client is manifesting when experiencing an emotional crisis, the therapist would learn to recognize the spontaneous healing shift as the client goes into a natural ultradian rest—rejuvenation phase, those moments when a person is more accessible to the inner world and the resolution of its problems.

Therapists would do a lot less suggesting, a lot less directing, a lot less projecting of whatever the therapist's pet theory is. Therapists would focus on helping patients understand their own spontaneous mind-body languages. More genuinely valid, non-biased therapy could then take place. Many therapists still are victims of their own preconceptions. They're still projecting; they're always worried about the patient's

transference onto them. Well, how about our idiotic projections onto the patient? What about our idiotic theories? I'm developing methods where the whole point is *not* to project, but rather to create situations (what Erickson called "The Field Experiment") so that which is inherently within the client can come forth.

That's what Freud did when he shifted from hypnosis/direct suggestion to free association, right? He went from a directive to a non-directive, more unbiased way of getting information. I presume to do the same thing with "ideodynamic approaches" that are even more sensitive forms of mind-body communication. Free association is tied to linguistic language, whereas the ideodynamic approaches are tuned into many more forms of body language: sensation, perception, movement, and kinesthetic. The new mind-body therapists will become pioneers in learning how to read the languages that are coming to them from the patient. It's carrying out Freud's idea to new levels of sensitivity receptivity—it's carrying on Erickson's *utilization approach* to new levels of sophistication. It is extending the field and range of human consciousness itself. We are becoming more deeply human as we learn to tune into our own natural patterns of mind-body communication.

YAPKO: There is an inherent danger associated with talking about mind/body healing. There are less biologically and less psychologically sophisticated people making a global statement like "the mind can heal the body." They tell their cancer patients, "Well if you visualize this, you'll get well." It's not bad enough this lady has cancer, but now she's being told that it's because she didn't express her feelings properly. You're in the best position to address this. How would you describe this kind of perspective?

ROSSI: With one word—*humility*. Acknowledge that we are in kindergarten. Acknowledge that there are profound connections between mind, emotions, body, and molecules. There are mind/molecular associations in cancer, and every other illness and state of health, which we are only now beginning to understand. Acknowledge that such associations are there, but they're functioning for the most part on an unconscious level. We're all in kindergarten! We've barely scratched the surface! The tragedy of our current situation is that we know there are all these mind-body connections, but we do not know how to utilize them effectively.

I *never* set myself up as being extraordinarily competent. I do not know how to cure polyps, I do not know how to cure cancer, I don't know how to deal with any mind/body illness, except create situations where I get some of my biases personal out of the way, and perhaps some of the client's own learned limitations out of the way, so we can just explore how nature might facilitate itself. We are in kindergarten...

YAPKO: And that's what you have been talking about—as the language of facilitation—rather than putting yourself in the position of being "the healer."

ROSSI: That's right. I am *not* a healer!

YAPKO: I appreciate your candor, Ernie. As always, it's a pleasure to have had the chance to talk with you. Thanks for doing this interview.