

Martin T. Orne, MD, PhD: A Celebration of Life and Friendship

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Martin Orne died of pneumonia complicating advanced colon cancer on February 11, 2000. He was 72 years old. Most of us know that he was Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, a dual appointment not frequently given at Penn, and that he had directed the Unit for Experimental Psychiatry at the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital for more than three decades. It was in his laboratory that many research leaders of our field became professionally established, including David Dinges, Fred Evans, John Kihlstrom, Campbell Perry, Helen Pettinati, Karl Scheibe, Peter Sheehan, Ron Shor, Paul Wender, and Wayne Whitehouse to name a few. None of us could be as proud of the scientific foundation of our field as we are today without these seminal contributors and without Martin's own enormous insight into the process of hypnosis and the context in which it occurs. What Jack Hilgard did for hypnotizability scales, Martin did for the social context in which hypnosis occurs. *Demand characteristics* is in every competent clinician's lexicon; and the *anticipatory socialization* of the doctor-patient relationship and how to enhance its effects, is so automatically understood that many in the future will never know it was Martin who taught us these concepts. The American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, and the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law honored him for his lifetime contributions to our field, and he received two honorary doctorate degrees—rare recognition by any standard. An additional accomplishment was his 30-year editorship of the *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis* (IJCEH). In this capacity, he helped Jack Hilgard re-establish the International Society of Hypnosis (ISH) under its new name in 1973. During Martin's Presidency, ISH awarded its highest honor, The Benjamin Franklin Gold Medal, to the first recipient, Milton H. Erickson, at the 6th International Congress of Hypnosis in 1976.

I knew Martin as a colleague for over 30 years while we were at the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital. We were both members of the hospital's Medical Staff of over 250 psychiatrists. I was a clinician in private practice and for many years directed the Continuing Education Program in Psychiatry for the Institute and the University of Pennsylvania. He, of course, directed his laboratory made famous for its seminal work of the effects of sleep deprivation, the role of hypnosis in pain management, and the interplay of memory and suggestion. For a brief time near the end of his productive career, I collaborated in his study of the effects of hypnosis on the experience of pain in sickle cell anemia patients, published in 1997 in the IJCEH. To see Martin tenderly and with great skill teach self-hypnosis to separate groups of children, adolescents, and adults was illuminating. His sense of gentle authority won our subjects' respect. When the study was completed, we were surprised by the sadness expressed by the subjects who had grown fond of the investigative team. Such was the human bonding that he affected in these special people.

When I first met Martin in the hallways of the Institute in the early 1970's, he approached me after an evening staff meeting. We sensed that we would begin a friendship, and he

suddenly told me that, “Friendship is a complex process. It is sometimes hard, and often difficult to maintain. But it is joyous too, and full of unexpected rewards. All that is really needed is the patience and commitment to make it work.” I had the advantage of working in the same hospital, serving on the same committees, and having so many opportunities to join forces, that there was little room for permanent riffs. I am grateful for his loyalty to me and for mine to him. As promised, our friendship was not always easy, but it was real and treasured.

Martin was a physically big man, over 6 feet tall and no lightweight. He smoked in the early days and often sent me patients referred to him who were overweight and smokers, as he stated, for “obvious reasons.” He ate with a cultured taste that was not reserved for fine restaurants alone. Can you imagine him, as I saw him, carefully lifting half a dozen plates of asparagus salad in our hospital cafeteria to determine which one would be the finest? I, who have perfected the art of “eat and run”, was astounded at his total absorption in this process. In Glasgow Scotland in 1982, he asked me to join Jack Hilgard and him at the Partridge Inn where, with a chef to match his own palate, he introduced me to the exquisite pleasure of pheasant on red cabbage. And the conversation: to experience Jack and Martin discussing the science of hypnosis and the clinical implication of laboratory findings was a heady experience. Then to talk about friends, young students and of course families, careers, and the deep love of just being alive and sentient capped an evening I will never forget. I have counted Jack as my friend from that evening on. Food and friends - mutual feasts Martin enjoyed sharing over and over again.

His clinical acumen is not widely known except by those on our Medical Staff as it played out daily in the life of our hospital. Martin was the quintessential consultant, who observed every detail in a clinical presentation with full awareness of its context. Following one such consultation, I left a note in his laboratory that he must leave research immediately and join us full time in clinical activities, but he of course refused.

Despite his abiding love for research from the beginning, Martin rapidly gained a reputation as a consummate clinician in his early days in Boston — he would see only those patients who had failed in treatment with at least 2 previous therapists. However, he recognized that advances in research had the greater potential to help many more people than he could ever see in a clinical office. How lucky for us that he made this choice. Many of us are now free to practice hypnosis with full respect from the American Medical Association, both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association, and hypnosis societies around the world. His emphasis on controlled studies respecting the data from the laboratory even if it goes against our anecdotal clinical experience allowed hypnosis to take its place among the accepted and proven modalities in our field. His rigor and integrity in what he believed has made us all think hard. Whether we agree or not with his decisions, we must honor the man who so unflinchingly acted on his beliefs, his scientific data, and what he essentially thought was the right thing to do. Indeed, he has had an influence that exceeds most others in our field today.

Professional growth is dependent on friendships with other colleagues throughout our careers. Most of us limit our understanding of this process to teaching and mentoring young professionals in their early years. Few of us recognize the need to share ourselves with all our peers, young and old alike. But Martin did, and to the benefit of most whom he touched. He was a giant of a man and he will be missed by those of us who knew him well.