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EST Effectiveness

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HAVING SEEN a number of casualties from EST encounters, I am somewhat less sanguine about the results with this modality than is Dr. Mack in his recent report in *Psychiatric News*. In all fairness, I have also seen casualties from other techniques including psychoanalysis and behavior therapy. As a specialist in hypnosis, part of my practice has been a graveyard of psychotherapeutic failures, cases referred to me as a last resort with the hope that hypnosis could accomplish what other methods have failed to do. I wish I could say that these expectations have always been fulfilled. They have not.

There are some patients who cannot be reached by any method in use today. Conversely, there are some who respond readily to *any* helping relationships, the techniques employed serving merely as forms of communications. Finally, there are some whose idiosyncratic needs attune them selectively to specific interventions, whether they bear a scientific imprimatur, or skirt close to the fringes of quackery, and who remain untouched by other methods. To generalize to the world at large from successes scored with a special technique constitutes an error that many of us are apt to indulge. Needless to say the effectiveness of any method is no measure of its scientific authenticity. The danger of testimonials proffered by respected authorities is that we are tempted to accept on faith

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turgid precepts founded on opinion and sentimentality. While the sincerity of Dr. Mack is not to be doubted, and while he is to be congratulated for his courage in challenging orthodoxy, his global assumptions about EST, in my opinion, need considerably more empirical verification than is available to us at this time.

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