

**Milton Erickson: Born 5<sup>th</sup> December 1901  
– Died 25 March 1980**

An American psychiatrist, who didn't believe in labelling people, more that people have the power to solve their own problems – it didn't need to take long – a small change was often enough to set a process of larger change in motion. His approach was popularised by one of his first students, **Jay Hayley** in 1973.



*A goal  
without a  
date is just  
a dream.*

*Milton H. Erickson*



**Mental Research Institute (MRI), Palo Alto, California** has played a vital role in the development of solution focused approach.

It was Founded by **Don Jackson** and with the help of **Richard Fisch, Paul Watzlavic & John Weakland** they published their first major work in 1974. They developed a more goal orientated approach and this had a great influence on later work.



"Knowing when to push, when to let go, what to listen to, and what to ignore - all these skills are based on the profound respect for human dignity and working to restore a sense of who they are and what they want to be." – **Insoo Kim Berg**

## **The birth of the solution focused approach**

At a MRI conference in 1977, Steve de Shazer (*25<sup>th</sup> June to 11<sup>th</sup> September 2005*), and Insoo Kim Berg (*25<sup>th</sup> July 1934 to 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007*) were introduced to each other and began working together; they eventually became a couple and were married for 28 years. They introduced the one-way screen to learn more about effective therapy by observing what worked, what didn't work and to help educate students . De Shazer and Berg were pressurised to stop using it and when the tension became so intense, the two camps parted company. They started their own practice in **1978 called the Brief Therapy Centre (BFTC)**, Milwaukee and de Shazer published his first book in 1982.

## **“the grand old man of family therapy”**

"I've done the best I can to say what I wanted to say, to say what I meant, and to mean what I said." –  
**Steve de Shazer**

