This folio consists of pages from different sections of the book presented together as a sampler for illustrative purposes. Full book is 123 pages with illustrations..

Foundations of Structural Integration

Fascia Plasticity Gravity Segmentation Alignment Balanced Movement

+

The Magic Moment

By,

Ritchie Mintz

Foundations of Structural Integration

Contents

Dedication 4
Preface 5
What's In a Name? 5
Introduction – Banjos to Bodywork 6
I Get Structurally Integrated 8
What is Structural Integration? 10
The Six Foundations of Structural Integration 17
Fascia 17
Plasticity 28
  The Big IT 34
Gravity 35
Segmentation 43
  The Lumbo-Dorsal Hinge 52
Alignment 55
Balanced Movement 68
  Ida Rolf's Movement Exercises 80
  Lathi -- Ancient Movement for Modern Times 91
The Magic Moment 92
The Together Body 96
The Alchemy of It All 98
The Next Generations 114
More Questions Than Answers 118
The Seeing Eye 121
Author ..... Back Cover

Copyright © 2012
Text and images: Copyright © Ritchie Mintz

International Standard Book Number: 978-0-9793617-0-8

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying, duplicating, recording or otherwise without prior written permission from the author.

Inquiries may be addressed to:
ritchie@ritchiemintz.com

To

Ida P. Rolf

(1896-1979)

… who dragged me out of the weeds
and made a human being out of me.

Photo: David Kirk-Campbell

Preface

The prime mission of my school and this book is to educate the public about human physical structure. This book is based on my more than three decades of continual experience, investigation, contemplation, and practice of the Ida P. Rolf Method of Structural Integration. After doing more than 30,000 sessions, it is clear to me now that in the time I have left, I can reach the most number of people not by doing one session at a time but by replicating myself.

But who am I to write a book explaining the life work of Ida P. Rolf, PhD? How can I assert this or that when there is barely a shred of scientific evidence that anything I say is true? In fact, much of what I know and do runs contrary to current medical theory and practice. Why should anyone believe me? Why should you? Well, I agree - Don't believe me. Don't accept anything I write as so or correct until you check it out for yourself and verify that you can corroborate it with your very own personal experience.

I write in the first person. I do this deliberately because writing in the third person narrative projects an aura of authority that says: *This is true and correct and anyone who does not agree is wrong.* I make no such assertion. I base my contentions upon my years of learning, practice, experience, and results. This book is my story of how human bodies, my own and countless others have shown up for me. It is intended to be a conversation that asks more questions than it answers and invites new worlds of

speculation about what the human body is and how we can evolve it to higher levels of function.

To any critic who might think this book is too thin, too thick, incomplete, overblown, audacious, naïve, wrong, or deficient in any way: You can be kind with your pen and take heart in knowing that if I have fallen short, your criticism pales in comparison to the excoriation-royal that awaits me when I am called to face Dr. Rolf.

Introduction -- Banjos to Bodywork

The first thing you need to know about me to understand my attitude about education is that I am a banjo picker. That's right, I squandered my precious youth playing bluegrass music on the 5-string banjo. Those were fun times because there were plenty of other people who wanted to play right along with me. When I was 15, I started teaching and most of my students were adults. Dig it -- when I was 15, I was making $5 an hour giving banjo lessons. This was in 1962, at a time when fully-grown adults were raising a family of four on $2.00 an hour. Yes, I know that banjo pickin' evokes visions of the miscreants from the movie Deliverance but don't let that fool you. The 5-string banjo is a deeply mysterious instrument that, like structural integration, forms its own ironic world.

Banjo pickers are not stupid, but they are twisted and I mean that in the best way. It's the kind of twist that produces genius. You have to be twisted to make sense out of the 5-string banjo because it is the only instrument I have ever come across that has the highest pitch string right next to the lowest pitch string. Think about that. On the guitar, as with all other normal instruments, the strings progress across the neck in order from bass to treble. So who do you think would be best suited to learning to play the 5-string banjo?

You might think that the best candidate to learn the banjo would be a guitar player. After all - guitars, like banjos, have strings that you fret and pick, so how hard could it be? That's a good theory but in fact, in practice, in the real world, most guitar players make the worst banjo students. That's because they can't deal with the dementia of that highest string being right next to the lowest string. Here, previous training and experience works against, not for, the learner.

The road to becoming a structural integrator has traditionally run through massage schools. My professional experience has taught me that structural integration is as different from massage as banjo is from guitar. I could not help but wonder why massage therapy instruction has to precede structural integration training. I asked myself -- Is it possible to grow structural integrators from pups?

Along the way, while I was contemplating the riddle of teaching the banjo, another major event caught my eye that, in a similar way, forever changed my view on education. I am a private pilot and I have closely followed aviation for decades. Until the mid-1980's, all airline pilots came from the military because there was no other way to get the kind and amount of flight hours required for the profession. Few civilians had the money to train themselves through the ratings and the multi-engine experience needed to meet the entrance requirements. That's it; there was no other way.

Then I read a revolutionary article in an aviation trade magazine. It reported about a pilot training school that was offering what it called *ab initio* airline pilot training. In Latin, ab initio means *from the beginning*. Imagine this: Here was a flight school that was taking rank beginners and making airline pilots out of them in a year. When I read

that, I knew that I could design an *ab initio* curriculum that could train a rookie to become a practitioner of structural integration.

It turns out that I had precedent and history on my side. Dr. Rolf left a very clear roadmap of her life's work in the form of what has reverently and affectionately been called Grandma's Recipe. I refer of course to the 10-session sequence of transformation that constitutes the basic work of structural integration. The Recipe presents a way for an entry-level practitioner to get predictable results. It is in the process of taking many people through the 10-series that a rookie can learn what a body is, why bodies get in the troubles with gravity that pervasively afflict the human race, and what can be done about it. Dr. Rolf predicted that this learning process takes about 5 years (after training) and it is my personal and professional experience that she was right. My job was to put my experience of structural integration into the fire of the crucible and discern the basic concepts that are its parts so as to create a teachable and learnable curriculum.

Structural integration is not a technique or series of techniques. It is a vision of the body's design. It is a series of ideas about how the human body structure can achieve the evolution of millennia in 10 hours. No other modality or discipline I know of on Earth offers this tantalizing possibility. This makes structural integration its own distinct entity unlike any other. In my experience as an educator, the dogma of other modalities hinders rather than helps the new learner. Like the banjo, much of structural integration makes more sense if the learner's mind is uncluttered by the doctrine of other disciplines.

I knew that I had to document the unique building blocks of structural integration. I asked myself -- What would somebody have to know before learning Grandma's Recipe for the Recipe to make sense? Out of that crucible came these foundations of structural integration. The foundations concern the body's hidden anatomical relationships and the mysterious qualities of fascia that make structural integration the unique entity that it is. If I was to add fuel and oxygen to the fire of structural integration in this lifetime, it was only a matter of time until these foundations of structural integration would be a book and this is it.

Does this book teach everything there is to know about structural integration? No. No book or school can possibly teach it all. My goal is to present what I consider to be the information required to understand why human bodies get into the structural troubles they get into and what we as structural integrators can do about it. I have personally demonstrated that these foundations are ideal preparation for learning the 10-session structural integration series and becoming an exemplary practitioner. In teaching SI, it is possible to teach too little but it is also possible to teach too much. I hope to teach just enough to properly recreate the experience of structural integration without losing its essence.

There is one more element that contributed to my vision of the instruction of structural integration in the world. This came from a conversation with a respected and beloved elder of the structural integration world, a man now dearly departed named Peter Melchior. I once asked Peter, "How in the world do you teach someone to be a Rolfer?" His answer startled me in the best way. Without missing a beat, Peter said, "You don't. You give them the space to experience that they are one."

I love that! I thought, Wow, that's great. I don't have to teach anybody anything. All I have to do is create a space that allows people to replicate my experience of structural integration into them. And that is where these foundations of structural

integration really came from. I looked deep inside myself and extracted exactly what was needed to make sense out of something that only makes sense when you enter into its own ironic world. That is when I knew that I could hold a space where even a banjo player could become a practitioner of structural integration. That became my criteria: Can a banjo picker get it? If this picker can, you probably can too.

I Get Structurally Integrated
Sunshine Canyon Boulder, Colorado
April 1973

When Michael McIver opened the door, he had a twinkle in his eyes and a smile that hinted of a secret he was willing to share. I was immediately taken with how happy he seemed to be with his livelihood. I remember thinking, "Maybe I could be that happy some day."

As we visited, Michael was looking at me in a way I felt I'd never been seen before. What is he looking at? What does he see? I wondered if he could see my insecurities. Could he see how small and insignificant I felt? Could he see how I really wanted to love myself and my life if only -- if only what? Even I didn't know. But somehow, Michael McIver, Certified Rolfer, seemed to see and to know.

We walked back to the Rolfing room where I found a low homemade plywood table with a foam pad covered by a clean sheet. One corner of the room had a Polaroid camera on a tripod. We were ready. I removed my outer clothes and left my shorts on. Michael's presence was so easy that I felt okay. I remember thinking, "Not bad for a guy who doesn't want to be seen at the beach in a bathing suit."'

Michael took Polaroid pictures of my front, back, and profile and we looked at them right away. Michael pointed out how my lower back was so swayed forward as to be completely hidden behind my elbows in the side views. He showed me how my ribs were compressed and dropped down in front, giving me a look of having little or no chest. I already knew that. Most striking was that my hips, as seen from front and back, did not begin to approach being level. My right hip was dramatically higher than my left and my right shoulder was dropped down a lot lower than my left shoulder. In profile, my tilted pelvis dumped my abdomen forward. I had always wondered – I don't have an ounce of fat on me, how could I have that protruding belly?

Michael was quick to say that these were not isolated problems or independent from one another. They were all related and all part of a "big picture", if one only had the eyes to see it that way. I thought for the first time that I was beginning to "see" what Michael saw when he looked at me. It occurred to me that if he could see people's "invisible" problems that most folks just take for "normal", the world must be a pretty funny looking place to a Rolfer. Perhaps that was the reason for Michael's secret smile. Maybe he could see places where people hold their strains and pains and he knew he could do something to help them. I sure hoped he could do something for mine.

We did a session about once every two or three weeks. At times the work seemed intense but I noticed that whatever discomfort I experienced came not from Michael but rather from inside of me. There were places that were very tender which were, of course, right where I needed the most release. Michael was very sensitive to how much pressure was too much and although he pushed my limits at times, he never exceeded them.

Considering the outcome of Michael's efforts, it is amusing that at the time, I

found some of his favorite comments very annoying. As he worked, he would say things like, "Now feel how you can breathe into your armpits." Or he would say, "Feel the length come into your back." Sometimes he said, "See if you can feel the support of gravity."

Whenever he said these things, I would think to myself (but never aloud since I truly liked him), "Would you please spare me these kooky California witticisms." Most annoying was how he proclaimed repeatedly throughout the ten sessions, "We're breaking up the ice so the river can flow." "Give me a break!" was my silent retort. But the Rolfing went on.

In addition to the Polaroid pictures he took before session #1, Michael also took pictures after #3, #5, and #7. As we looked over these pictures, Michael seemed most pleased. He pointed and said, "Look how much longer this side is," and, "See how much more balanced this looks." I looked and looked but I swear I never saw any changes. I said as nicely and agreeably as I could, "Michael, if you say so, okay, but I don't see it." Michael was unperturbed. He just shrugged as if to say, "It is there. Someday you will see it." And boy, was he right about that!

We completed the series with my 10th session in August, about five months after we began. Michael took a final set of photos after session #10 and we reviewed the pictures of Before #1 and After #10. Michael went on and on about how this had lengthened and that had changed. He spoke of balance and support, of release and organization. He asked me if I saw what he was talking about. Again, I said, "Michael, if you say so, I believe you, but I swear I don't see it." Michael smiled that "I know a secret" smile and said, "This isn't the end -- it's the beginning. Don't forget, Ritchie, your body will continue to change in the next six months or more." He thanked me and I thanked him and I left the house with my pictures in my hand.

I got into my car and started the engine but I didn't drive away. I sat there thinking - Well, everybody told me to get Rolfed and I did, but so what? I didn't feel any different and I saw no changes in the pictures. I sensed that something significant had happened but I could not determine what. I scratched my head, drove home, and threw the pictures into a drawer. And that's the way I stayed for the next six months. I was in a long-term state of scratching my head and wondering just what in the heck this Rolfing thing was. It was August 1973.

Six months later, in February, I happened to be walking down Pearl Street in Boulder. I was minding my own business and thinking about anything but Rolfing when I happened to catch a glimpse of myself reflected like a mirror in a storefront window. What I saw stopped me in my tracks.

I looked and looked and looked. I exclaimed out loud, "That's not me!" But it was me. As I looked, I saw that my sunken chest was puffed up high and proud. My butt, which had always stuck up like a duck's, was neatly tucked down and under. My former sway back was long and straight. My scrawny neck, usually stuck forward like a buzzard's, was also long and straight. My head, instead of poking forward, was poised and balanced easily atop my shoulders. My shoulders were back and I looked like a proud Marine at attention. No, better than that. I was both straight and relaxed all at the same time. I took a couple of steps forward and back. Instead of my awkward waddle that I had grown to hate so much over the years, I saw a brave, self-assured citizen of the world striding down the street.

I couldn't believe my eyes! That couldn't be me! But there it was. I took a breath and an amazing thing happened. I felt the breath effortlessly fill my whole chest and my back right up into my armpits! I was stunned! I couldn't help but remember Michael McIver saying, "Breathe into your armpits." I had silently ridiculed the very idea.

I found that if I swayed and shifted my weight back and forth between my toes and my heels, I could find a point where I felt completely weightless, as if I weren't even there. At that zero-balance point, I felt that all my front muscles perfectly balanced my back muscles. At the same time, my back muscles perfectly balanced my front muscles. Likewise, my left and right sides perfectly balanced each other and I was... I was... well, balanced. I felt supported, however, I wondered, supported by what? It hit me again what Michael had said -- "Feel the support of gravity." And for the first time in my life, I did.

Then an even more amazing thing happened. As I stood there oblivious to all the other life around me on Pearl Street, I felt a river of… I didn't know what… run up my spine! It seemed to begin in the seat of my jeans and it shot right up my spine and out through the top of my head. Again, Michael's words washed over me: "We're breaking up the ice so the river can flow!" YES! Yes, I feel it! I feel the river!! It was perfect.

At that point, it hit me all at once like a ton of bricks. In that profound moment, I fully got what structural integration is and what it does. I understood what my body problems were and I knew why no previous efforts ever touched them. Suddenly I got how SI effectively addressed my structural issues. I also knew in that magical moment who Ida Rolf was and what her legacy was that she left for the planet.

Superimposed on top of all this revelation was something even more profound for me. It occurred to me that I had spent the previous 26 years … all my life… hating my body. Now, here in one second, I saw that a technology existed to, for the most part, make anything one could want out of a body. Here was a system that can release the human body from the pattern of distortions caused by birthing, accidents, injuries, serious illness, pregnancy and delivery, surgery, negative emotion, and even the strain of living in the earth's gravity. Here, finally, was the tool I could use to work on myself and erase the blocks to the happiness that had eluded me all my life.

Standing there before my reflection on Pearl Street that crisp February afternoon, I forgave my body and my life. My heart swelled with love for myself. My eyes flooded with tears as I forgave my body for its smallness and its fear and self-hatred. I realized that had I been born with the rugged swashbuckling body that I yearned for all my life, I would hardly have been capable of appreciating how structural integration had set me free. Nor would I have the compassion and skill I would need for working with people who are small and stuck like I was. In that minute, a whole new life began for me that continues to this day.

I thought of Michael McIver and his secret smile. I thought of the love Dr. Rolf must have for this planet and its people. I thought that this thing with its unwieldy yet totally descriptive name - structural integration - was an original creative concept that had changed my whole way of relating to myself and to my life. And I knew in that beautiful moment that I wanted to share this with the world. I, too, would be a Rolfer.

What is Structural Integration?

The question of what structural integration is also includes the question of how and where it fits into our world. At this writing in the second decade of the 21st century, there are approximately 3000 structural integrators in the world. If you asked each of

them what structural integration is, you would probably get 3000 different answers. Who is right? Very likely, they are all right. However, for any answer, there is always room to say: But wait, you didn't include *this.* So if we cannot get a single clear answer to what structural integration is, how can I say that *these* are the foundations of structural integration? Structural integration is a puzzle with each experiencer having a piece or many pieces. But what is the whole picture?

When bodies get into local trouble (pain), the trouble does not stay local for long. It quickly spreads through the fascial network to the entire body. Then, "fixing" the local trouble is woefully inadequate because it leaves untouched all the other forces that caused the local pain. What is needed is a new bigger picture of a connective tissue body that is all continuously connected. This allows us to see beyond this or that local ache or pain to the disorganization that exists on the regional, global, and universal levels.

This is what separates structural integration from all other work in the world. By using Dr. Rolf's ideas and methods as I do, I can give all the symptoms a sideways glance and *systematically* release, open, lengthen, organize, and align the entire fascial body. This allows me to bypass working on the thousand twists and turns and go straight upstream to the underlying shortness that causes it all. This one idea presents the possibility of *putting bodies together* and of the *integration* that Dr. Rolf speaks of in her quote. This is what is missing from our societal view of bodies and this is what must change.

Foundations of Structural Integration

This book is written from several perspectives. It is my experience of being a structural integration client as well as a longtime practitioner of Rolfing® Structural Integration and it is an educator's commentary on the state of the art of instruction of structural integration.

My hope is that I have assembled a body of knowledge that establishes a reasonable and understandable curriculum that any reasonable person might understand. In teaching structural integration, it is possible to teach too little but it is also possible to teach too much. I hope to teach just enough to recreate structural integration's foundations without losing its essence.

About the Author

Ritchie Mintz

I needed Rolfing® from the day I was born. I was failure-to-thrive with an imploded core. My parents brought me to doctor after doctor and they all said nothing was wrong. But something was wrong.

Ritchie graduated with a BA in 1969 and moved to Boulder, Colorado in 1971 to play music and write his first instructional book **Bluegrass Bass**. But Boulder held other riches – it was the epicenter of the Rolfing world. While living in Boulder, Ritchie got Rolfed™ and it changed his whole life.