

*This folio is a sampler of selected sections.
The full book is 90 pages.*

From Adam & Eve



to Ida Rolf



What is the Random Body?

Ritchie Mintz

**Rolfing® Structural Integration
Certified Advanced Practitioner**

**From
Adam & Eve
to
Ida Rolf**

What is the Random Body?

By

Ritchie Mintz

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Inquiries may be addressed to:

ritchie@ritchiemintz.com

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To

Peter Melchior

(1931 – 2005)

Philosopher, Poet, Rolfer, Teacher, Friend

... and the most elegant Rolfer I ever saw work.

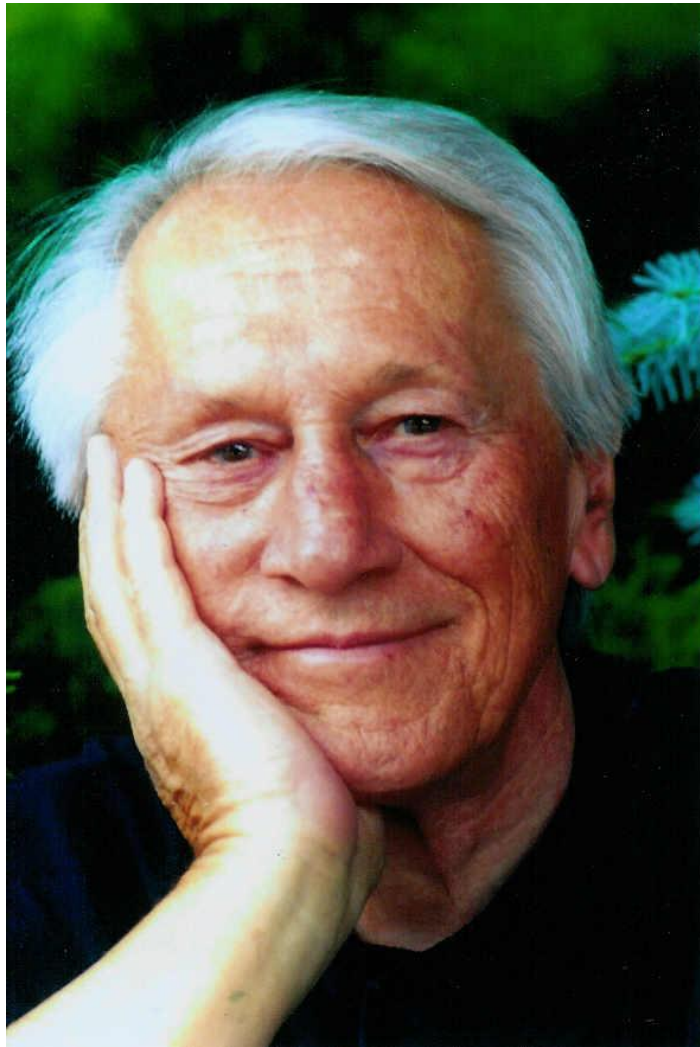


Photo: William Corey

Introduction

Dr. Ida P. Rolf had a special name for bodies that had not been processed in the 10-session series of her work. She called them “random”. Random bodies. The word describes the condition of every person that ever lived and died on the planet Earth, from the first hominids to the 20th century lifetime of Ida Rolf. If you want to get biblical, the history of the random body would read from Adam and Eve to Ida Rolf.

There were no Rolfed™ bodies before Ida Rolf and there are precious few today. Statistics on the subject are hard to come by and must be left to broad estimate and best guess. At this writing in the end of the second decade of the 21st century, there are about 3,000 structural integrators in the world. These 3,000 come from three major schools of structural integration (SI), several smaller schools, and a few very small schools. (My school must surely qualify as the most infinitesimal school in size but I hope not in impact.) Broad estimates and best guesses places the number of people in the world who have been structurally integrated at about a million, and the number grows daily.

The integrated and balanced human body envisioned by Dr. Rolf is a pretty new phenomenon. She was born in 1896 and pioneered her work from the 1950’s forward. This means that at present, the Rolfed body dates back only about 70 years. That is a tiny speck of time compared with the thousands of generations that have lived and died on the earth since humans climbed down from the trees.

Ida Rolf was audacious. She had to be because it takes audacity to think that one might be able to rearrange a human body and get it to function better than the Great Lord God Almighty could do with the Crown of His Creation. To that extent, every practitioner of structural integration shares in that boldness. So, in the spirit of that audacity, I will let you in on a long-running conversation that I have had with the Almighty since the day I figured out what Rolfing® Structural Integration is and what it had done for me.

Here is my side of the conversation:

“God (if I may call you by your first name), you made a mistake. And not just a little ‘oops’. This one’s a doozy. And the flaw is in the crown of your creation, no less. I’m referring, of course, to the human body, which you created in your own image. Really? You have back trouble? Down here on Earth, we humans sure do. We’ve got a whopping boatload of back troubles and lots of other fractuosities to endure because of your faulty design. Are you sure you don’t want to walk back that ‘created in your image’ part?”

And every time I have asked the Almighty that question, I always get the same answer. The Great Spirit plainly and clearly tells me (*italics added for supernal effect*):

“There was no mistake. I included the Rolfer in the design.”

And herein hangs the tale. This conversation answers the question of why structural integration is different and apart from all other interventions into the human body.

There are many schools of the body. The Western-American medical system is mostly concerned with the treatment of diseases and focuses mostly upon changing the body chemistry. This is accomplished by introducing drugs into the body that fight the disease and correct body chemistry back to parameters that define the body as “normal”. The key to success in these endeavors is to properly diagnose what has “gone wrong”. Then the proper remedy is introduced to correct what has “gone wrong”.

But not all body aberrations are bio-chemical. There is a whole world of structural problems that, in our modern medical system, falls into the category of orthopedics. These problems surely include accidents and injuries. Getting into a vehicle collision or falling off a ladder is not a natural process. When people get wrecked and need surgery, casts, and stitches, it is usually obvious what has “gone wrong”. Then, just like curing a disease, the proper remedy is introduced and the problem is “solved”. The common link in all this is the need to determine what has “gone wrong”. Then the proper remedy is applied and the “problem” is “solved”. This is what makes it so hard to wrap the mind around the question: What is a random body?

Here is the crux of the issue: In the random body, *everything* has gone wrong. That is, in the random body, there is no *one thing* that has “gone wrong”. It is *all* wrong. To be clear what I mean by “all wrong”,

here are some definitions. The body has certain directions. The directions are the relationships of left-to-right, front-to-back, top-to-bottom, and inside-to-outside. Then there are the body levels. The levels are the relationships of local, regional, global, and universal. When I say that everything in the random body is wrong, I am talking about a body where every fiber of tissue in the entire body is wrongly placed left-to-right, front-to-back, top-to bottom, inside-to-outside, locally, regionally, globally, universally, from the top of the head to the soles of the feet.

What makes the entire concept hard to fathom is that, since Adam and Eve, there has been no Rolfed body with which to compare. So the entire condition of the random body has been taken for “normal”. I put quotes around the word “normal” because nothing about the random body is really normal. The random condition is just so ubiquitous as to be taken for normal because random bodies are all we have seen for all of our lives and back to Adam and Eve. Ida Rolf was the first human to demonstrate that another way is possible. And she didn’t do it by finding any “one thing” that had “gone wrong” with any of the bodies that graced her Rolfing® table.

There is another factor that makes the concept of the random body even harder for society to grasp. It turns out that when the *everything* that is wrong with the random body persist long enough, one local body part or region will complain. When that happens, medical science has names and diagnoses for those local complaints: back spasms, spinal disk pathologies, sciatic nerve flare ups, numb and tingling extremities, neck pains, headaches, flat feet, blown out knees, shin splints, crooked ankles, tennis elbow, carpal tunnel, etc, etc, and on and on.

What is not recognized is that these disparate diagnoses are all pulled together by one common theme: Each diagnosis is an exaggeration of the random pattern. That is, as the random pattern lingers and persists, the most pressure will find the weakest link in the body’s support system and express itself there as pathology. That is the place that has been so stressed for so long that it cannot adapt any more. So it fails. That is when a doctor can point to an x-ray and say, “Here’s your problem, buddy. This is what went wrong. But don’t worry, we can operate and fix it.”

What is also not recognized is that, at this point, fixing the local problem is woefully inadequate because the errant forces that are everywhere in the body are still present and active. Even with the offending part surgically fixed, the random body’s collapse in gravity progresses and everything is still all wrong. And now the body’s pressures are looking for the next most-weakest place to express themselves. Before long, that place will also complain and fail and there will be another diagnosis and another intervention to fix it. And the beat goes on.

That is the condition of most of the bodies that come to my Rolfing® table. They are collapsed in gravity to the limit of their body’s ability to endure. Many of these people have already been diagnosed and “fixed” several times before we meet. They are looking to avoid yet another surgery. They don’t know why they have hurt so much for so long. I have noticed that pain is a great equalizer. Anybody will do anything to get out of pain, even something “kooky” and non-medical like structural integration. By the time they come to me, most clients have already tried everything.

As I look back upon four decades of practice on thousands of people, I recognize a very high success rate. I have fixed a lot of local problems that people bring to my table. (I want to emphasize that I am not unique or alone. Any practitioner who is an heir to Ida Rolf can do the same and more.) How did I do that? How is it that I can do so much with so little? After all, my only tools are my hands and a homemade plywood table. How am I able to relieve so much pain without making a cut or administering a drug? And, most amazing of all, I am frequently able to do all this and much more in ten hours. How can this be? How can one person working quietly alone accomplish so much compared to the vastness of the American-Western medical system? And... I might add... at a tiny fraction of the cost. How?

The answer is that I have tools beyond hands and table. My first and most important tool is my Seeing Eye. The Seeing Eye is the eye that not only looks, but also really sees what is there. The Seeing Eye not only observes but also can recognize the significance of what it is looking at. That is the key to this first tool: Perhaps everyone sees the same thing that I see, but everyone else considers aberrated human physical structure

to be “normal”, even though it is not normal. That is how a society can look at a body that has collapsed in gravity and call the process “normal”. “Everybody gets old, right? You can’t stop that.” I hear that a lot. That sentiment is the very center of the conversation about the random body and that is what, as a society, we must change.

As a society, we judge health and wellness by certain bio-chemical parameters. When our fluids and organs test within normal limits, we are considered healthy and well. The body’s structural problems with gravity do not enter that equation. That is why our society does not consider the effects of gravity over time to be a part of aging. It is a culture-wide looking and not seeing. But the Seeing Eye can see where gravity flows through a body and where it does not.

That leads to the next level of seeing: The places where gravity easily flows through can lift, whereas the places where gravity does not flow through will collapse. The next level of seeing after that is recognizing that the most collapsed places coincide with the areas of the most chronic structural pain. When we, as a planet, can see that relationship, that will be the first moment the world will begin to wrap its mind around the concept of the random body.

My next most valuable tool, after the Seeing Eye, is what I am able to feel. In my book **Foundations of Structural Integration**, I spend a good bit of time presenting theories about how bodies get into their structural troubles with gravity and how they then get fixated into those random patterns. Those theories are based upon my decades of experience as a Rolfer™. The gift of all this experience is that I am able to feel the blocks and restrictions in a body as they let go. And magically, as the knots untie and the true layers of the body are revealed, my hands report back to my brain an eidetic image of everything that is in there.

I am able to feel the body unwind from its twisted tightness and shortness. In a series of glorious magic moments, I feel the body let go of its randomness and find its order. It is in the rapture of these magnificent transformational moments that I am able to feel what it means to be a random body. In those moments, I feel all the factors of randomness that comprise this book. And in those same magic moments, I feel the body seeking and finding its “Rolfed-ness”. This is where the random body comes apart and the Rolfed body comes together. It is in these transitional and transformational moments where I discover what it means for the entire human race to be made up of random bodies.

There is another tool that contributes to my success in relieving the aches and pains that drive people to my Rolfing® table. This tool demonstrates the irony and the humor that Dr. Rolf’s work brings to the conversation. The irony is that the recipe for my success is backwards from the prevailing paradigms of understanding human body structure. The humor is in how wrong our fascially illiterate society has gotten exactly what the human body is. So, what is this funny and mysterious tool that works by working backward?

The truth is: I don’t fix people’s pains by fixing the pains. If this is starting to sound too Zen for rational thought, it is. That is why it is so hard to write a book about the random body for a planet that has no consciousness about fascia. On this planet, at this time, all the talk is about bones, muscles, and nerves. As long as the paradigm is thinking about bones, muscles, and nerves, nothing about structural integration makes any sense at all. But as soon as the paradigm shifts to include fascia and its magical quality of plasticity, a whole new world of possibility emerges. The purpose of this book is to assist planet Earth in making that transition.

But getting back to my tricky little Zen tool, how do I fix pain by not fixing what is “wrong”? The answer lies in the difference between *this* body and *every* body. Remember that, in random bodies, there is no one thing that is wrong. In the Rolfer’s image of the random body, *everything* is wrong. So, as a Rolfer, I am way more interested in fixing the *everything* that goes wrong with *every* body than I am in what has gone wrong with *this* body that is on the table before me right now.

Here is what I tell the many people I mentioned before who come for relief: “I don’t know why you hurt and I don’t know how to fix it if I knew.” Then, just as their face begins to drop to the floor, I say, “But I do see a thousand other things that have gone wrong that we *can* fix. What do you say we fix the thousand things that we *can* fix and see what happens to your pain?” If they are willing to try structural integration on

that basis, I am eager to have them. But I never claim to know what's wrong nor do I predict in advance that it will get fixed. That way, I can live by an old policy I learned raising children: I never make a promise until after I know that I have already kept it.

That is more Zen than ever! What does that mean? Does that really mean I have no idea why people hurt? No, not at all. After decades of transforming bodies from random to Rolfed, my Seeing Eye tells me pretty quickly why a body before me hurts. But I do not claim to diagnose a medical condition nor any single cause. My eye sees the painful part as the end of the line where the pressures of the body's collapse in gravity meet the weakest links in the structural matrix. I work to take the strain off of those spots and redistribute the loads to the whole fascial net. When the body gives up its collapse and lifts instead, the load comes off the complaining sites and things can begin to heal. It is only after the client reports feeling better that I am free to say that I knew all along what was wrong and what to do.

People come to structural integration with a myriad of pains and symptoms. Each malady carries its own medical diagnosis and a way to name the problem in Latin. Here is what goes unrecognized and unappreciated on our 3-dimensional planet Earth: These disparate diagnoses are how the much larger and more chronic process of the body's collapse in gravity shows up as acute pain in localized places. So, here is the Zen in my method: I give the pains and the symptoms only a sideways glance and I then proceed to transform the body from random to Rolfed. I perform all the tasks described in this book that fix the thousand things that go wrong in the random body. I put these sore and aching bodies together in a way that is off of society's radar screen.

The problem of writing a book about putting bodies together is that we live in a world that doesn't even know that it has fallen apart. I feel like a barker at the sideshow who hollers, "Step right up, folks. I'm here to sell you something you never heard of because you don't know you need it." My job here is to educate the public about human physical structure. The first step of this job is to describe the starting point. That starting point is to describe and identify what a random body is. I have been a Rolfer™ since the 1970's and I have never heard this conversation. There are a lot of books that attempt to describe what a Rolfed body is (including my own: **Foundations of Structural Integration**) but I have never seen one that tries to describe what a random body is. That is the purpose of this book.

Preface

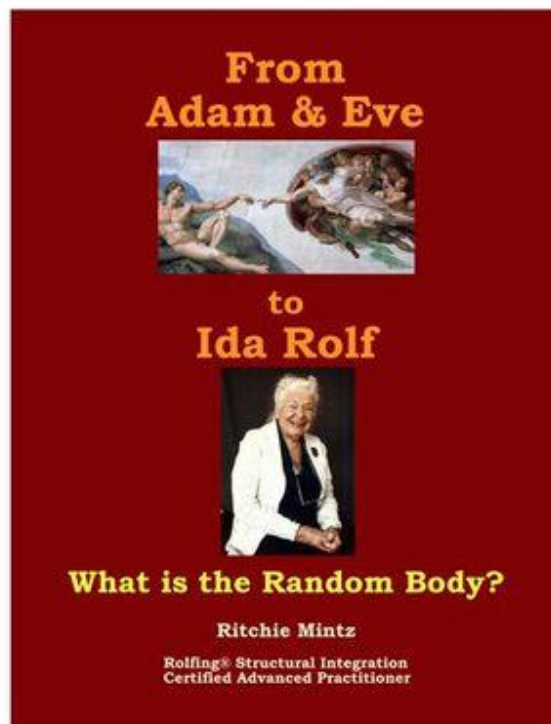
I write from my own experience and in the first person. I do this because the third-person narrative projects an aura of authority that says that anyone who disagrees is just plain wrong. I offer no such certainty. My assertions are based upon decades of study and practice of Rolting® Structural Integration. If it seems that I am citing facts for which there is no scientific evidence, I am. That is because scientific research into the world of fascia has only just begun. As yet, there is scant independent proof of anything I write here.

Thus, to any critic who might think this book is too thin, too thick, naïve, overblown, 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.

~ *Ritchie Mintz*
April 28, 2018

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Technology Has Brought Upgrades to Every Aspect of 21st Century Life. Structural Integration Brings that Upgrade to the Human Body. But every upgrade needs a starting point. The random body is Human 1.0. The structurally integrated body envisioned by Dr. Ida Rolf is Human 2.0.



From Adam and Eve to Ida Rolf, every person who lived and died on planet Earth had a random body. But nobody ever considered such a thought because there was no alternative. Now there is.

This book is written for a planet full of random bodies where no one knows they are a random body.

Join Ritchie Mintz on a journey through the characteristics that define the random body and explore a new world of possibilities.

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Also by Ritchie Mintz

What a book! It is a gem -- YOU are a gem. Thanks for teaching me by sharing your experience. I agree; it is amazing to experience in our daily work. You capture it so WELL!!!

~ Milree Keeling, International Assn. of Structural Integrators

This book covers the mysterious koans that baffle Rolfers. Many of the ideas that I previously thought of as incomprehensible mythic lore are now usable in my Roling® room.

This long after Dr. Rolf's passing, it is difficult to know exactly what SI is. Lest anyone forget, Ritchie's book is a callback to the foundational ideas. I don't often run into something that changes my way of practicing structural integration, but this book has.

~ Wiley Patterson, MD, Certified Advanced Rolfer™

