

The Mysteries of the Blueprint

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My clients often hear me say that Structural Integration does not focus on symptoms, pathology, or a diagnosis of disease, but rather on that "blueprint of perfection" within each of us, from which we all fall short. I explain that this is why Structural Integration results are essentially permanent: our bodies recognize what is being done as "correct," as fitting their blueprint—"This feels right, how I was always supposed to be"—and so they keep it.

The profound effectiveness of true Structural Integration is to me incomprehensible, and to some others unbelievable, without a concept of a healing potential already existing within the client. This healing potential or blueprint is something that cannot be directly observed or measured but can be rationally inferred from the fact that much more happens from SI than can be explained by what the practitioner observably does.

The second paragraph of the Rolf Institute of Structural Integration's new Standards of Practice document contains first a basic assertion about gravity and then this: "Equally fundamental is the recognition that each human being has an inherent internal pattern for optimal organization of form and function, which pattern is essentially self-organizing. The intent of Structural Integration is to identify and address that which keeps each person's pattern from manifesting as a higher level of order and function." (Note how different this is from the medical approach of looking for pathologies in order to identify a disease.)

Some of us have heard SI teachers say things like, "look for the resource in the body and support it" or "look for what's right in the body and bring it out", and were, at least at first, baffled as to how to do that. That is certainly how I felt in my training with Ida Rolf when she instructed one or all of us to "work with it" or

"fix it" without telling us how to do that. *She knew we had the potential to find it and the client had the potential to respond to us. I never heard her say those words but I saw it in her eyes, in her hands, and in her repeated injunction to "Follow the recipe!"*

The "Recipe," with its basic ten-series, is an eloquent testament to this truth. I have been doing standard ten-series and post-ten SI for 38 years, still following the recipe Dr. Rolf taught me. I have added no other techniques, although my SI touch, and my personal bodily organization, were undoubtedly refined by my exposure to Moshe Feldenkrais. As I have deepened, so have my results, making it unmistakably clear to me that, within Dr. Rolf's vision and recipe, with nothing added, there is something extraordinarily powerful and profound.

Some people are drawn to this idea of a blueprint and others are repelled by it. What follows is some of the history of the efforts to manage without this important idea.

Some History of the Opposition

In Jeffrey Burch's report on the development of osteopathy he states:

"The term Osteopathy is often taken at its surface meaning, referring to disorders of bones. Going back to its ancient Greek roots, however, osteopathy has another layer of meaning. OSTEON was originally not just bone but flesh in general. PATHOS referred to the deep things, particularly emotion, in each of us which yearn to be expressed. Osteopathy is more precisely "deep meaning yearning to be expressed in flesh." ... Although many people asked Still to teach, he resisted for a long time, saying he did not know how. Still's problem was his discovery of something beyond solutions to biomechanical problems. He had found a spiritual dimension in his work, which he never did find a direct way to teach. When his ability to treat patients was greatly reduced by a hernia,

he finally began to teach. His solution to the problem of how to teach the deeper part of his work was to teach anatomy and biomechanical examination in excruciating detail, knowing that such close attention to their patients would eventually lead a few of his students into the transcendent dimension of their hands-on experience.”¹

As osteopathic medical schools became integrated into allopathic medicine, D.O.s came to receive the same training as M.D.s, and also to receive the same licensing and privileges. With that, the essential magic of osteopathy disappeared; there was “no room at the inn” of allopathic medicine. For a method involving internal mysteries, being accepted into government-licensed mainstream medicine is the kiss of death; anything “unscientific” in the method must be sacrificed in return for the official stamp of approval and the money.

By the time Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859, scientific thinking was already starting to reject the notions underlying traditional osteopathy. The second half of the 1800’s was a time of enormous changes in thinking. Conservative theologians (like Calvinists) and liberal Protestant theologians (like Kierkegaard) agreed that science was the only way of explaining healing phenomena and that spiritual (or energy) explanations no longer had any place in observable happenings. Healing, to them, could not come from prayer, etc. This was followed in the first half of the 1900’s by the impressive success of allopathic or “regular” medicine in defining itself as so strictly scientific that other views were suppressed.

In 1906, leading Boston physicians and clergy joined to launch the Emmanuel Movement, in which medical clinics provided examinations, psychologists lectured on health and spiritual issues, and ministers provided private psychotherapy sessions. Based on a practical approach to the healing powers already within us, it spread quickly to other parts of the country, as its enormous success was told in such national magazines as *Good Housekeeping* and *Harpers Bazaar*. But after a four-year experiment with the Emmanuel Movement, and startled by its huge success, medicine joined mainline clergy in condemning it as “unscientific,” thus ending it.

We are still about where we were a hundred years ago. Science and medicine do the best they can (which is pretty impressive) with concepts and methods that are grossly lacking in vitalistic notions like those in Ida Rolf’s vision

upon which our work is based. After the Flexner Report was published in 1910, American medical schools were remade after the German laboratory science approach first adopted in this country at Johns Hopkins University. Some of the American public never stopped believing in healing through prayer and in alternative healing of all kinds, but the organized official powers continued to allow ever less room for belief in the concepts and methods which are basic for such work, which they label as “unscientific”.

So, why are some people drawn to our view of the blueprint and some repelled by it? The thread that runs through the above historical summary, usually implicit and not stated, is that a blueprint is a *potential*, not a fact, which requires exercising choice and *seeking* to be much good to us. Some of us who were attracted to SI work prefer living that way. “Scientific facts” easily lead to the view that we have no choice. We hear this from clients who say, “No thanks, I’ll just stick with what my doctor tells me.” Most government and medical regulators think that way, as do the many voters who support governmental controls. The problem is not with the scientists, statesmen, or religious leaders whose seeking is in harmony with the blueprint. The opposition comes from those who would use the power of their institutions to coerce us and impose their own agendas that are not in harmony with our blueprints.

Some Thoughts on Aspects of the Blueprint

Faith

After medical school I studied family therapy with Virginia Satir. Our small group of advanced students, sharing our frustration with her, asked, “We have learned your concepts and teach them, and have learned your methods and practice them, but none of us gets anywhere near the results that we see you get with clients.” After insisting that she had taught us everything she knew, she realized what her secret was. “It’s *faith*. I know with every fiber of my being that every intact human being has the potential for connecting with himself, for connecting with another person, and for finding ways to make room for both.” She then recounted her recent experience with a group of long-term mental hospital patients who had not spoken in years. In 15 minutes, she had them talking. In essence, they knew that she knew that they could do it. I believe that this sort of faith in our inner poten-

tial is present in the work of all of our best SI practitioners.

Sensory Awareness

After about 25 years of following simple sensory awareness routines that I had learned from Virginia Satir (and Charlotte Selver) and seeing so many astonishing yet predictable improvements in people, I felt impressed that this would be the key to treating convicted sex offenders.

For a couple of years in Oregon, my group classes with sex offenders were the high point of my week. These men, who all had felt, in their words, “like the scum of the earth”, became decent men with self-esteem and, for the first time in their lives, experienced good family lives and true friendships. They all stopped drinking, without our discussing it. Each lost all interest in their previous offense activity, for which they now felt deeply remorseful. The whole work was based on repeating every week, over and over, the same simple lesson: to focus their attention in their bodily sensations and feel all of them (my detailed description is published in the Dec 2004 *Journal of Structural Integration*).² Until then, they had no awareness of bodily feeling and, not surprisingly, they felt like “no-bodies”. As with the Rolfing® ten-series, far more was accomplished than could be accounted for by the directly observable lessons. Some deep pattern, yearning to be expressed, had to be involved. Clearly, what makes good men good is already within everyone, waiting to be realized.

Humility

When we lived in New York in the 1980s, I talked with a man who lived near the opera house, worked in a music store, and personally knew many of the Metropolitan’s famous singers. He said those who retained their greatness after achieving fame were those who remained humble, still wholeheartedly longing for that inner intensity. Those who became prideful no longer manifested their full musical potential, although

it was still in them. Our own fragile potential to fully manifest our blueprint as SI practitioners can be realized only when we continue as humble seekers ourselves.

Desire: “Ask, and it shall be given you”

All living creatures begin with blueprints. For all non-humans, it is automatic—they simply obey their blueprints as long as they live. For mankind it is different—our blueprints manifest themselves to their fullest only to the extent that we seek them. To be at our best, we must desire, seek, and choose. Years ago I became aware that my Rolfing® SI produced its best results when I consciously placed myself in “desire mode,” a recognizable physical state of inward sensory focus associated with yearning for the best of my client’s potential to be realized. Somehow that state evokes our clients’ blueprints of perfection.

“Ask, and it shall be given you” can be understood in two very different ways. Ask a logical question, seeking a rational answer, and you will get information. Science works that way. Ask as a request (if you can begin your sentence with “Please,” it’s a request), then you may be given what you desire and seek. That’s what we do in Structural Integration work. That’s how we find the blueprint, in our lives and in our work. By seeking it.

Please read *The Abolition of Man* (three 1943 lectures) by C.S. Lewis³. What he says about the blueprint, which he calls the *Tao*, is as deep and powerful as anything you will ever read. For Lewis, knowledge of it is not the product of science or intellect but of asking and seeking—“Only those who are practicing the *Tao* will understand it.” (p. 61) I assert that Ida Rolf and all our best SI teachers and practitioners are practicing the *Tao*, whatever we actually call it. There will always be those who do not understand it. We live with that.

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”⁴

Notes

¹ Burch, J. “Roots, Flowers and Pollen, a historical outline of manual therapies,” *Structural Integration*, The Rolf Institute®/Boulder, Sep 2002

² Humiston, K., “Internal Correlates of Relapse Prevention: Some Principles of Ida Rolf’s Work Used in Healing of Convicted Sex Offenders,” *Journal of Structural Integration*, Rolf Institute, Boulder, Dec 2004

³ Lewis, C.S., *The Abolition of Man*, 1955, Macmillan, New York, p. 61

⁴ *The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Jeremiah 29:13