

When Roling® SI Becomes Orchestration

The Power of Advanced Work

By Linda Grace, Certified Advanced Rolfer™, Rolf Movement® Practitioner

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Let's get this straight: every move a Rolfer makes advances a certain idea of structure. This idea is learned bit by bit, and with persistence emerges as an integrative body/mind operating procedure that can be followed with individuals who present very diverse integrative issues. Thus, segmenting off the standard 'basic' Ten Series of lessons in integration for the body, and then calling what follows after that 'advanced' is kind of goofy.

Ida Rolf, a genius of putting things together, had a failure moment, to hear some of the old guard tell it, when she put together an Advanced Four Series protocol to follow the Ten Series taught in the Basic Training in Roling® Structural Integration (SI). This four-session series used the same ideas of: a *basic core/line of the body* (that core/line was flexible, like a green willow stick); *balance front to back in the body* (Is the top of the torso in front or behind the hips? Is there a good resilient lumbar curve? Is there a good resilient thoracic curve?); *balance side to side in the body* (Is one shoulder or hip higher? Is more weight on one leg?); and *balance top to bottom* (grounding, lift).

Ida Rolf's Advanced Four Series might go like this, depending on the person:

1. An opening session, to take off the road wear with which the person shows up – basically the basic goals of the first three sessions of the Ten Series, except they are not a recapitulation, they go more into rotational issues that have shown up. (In modern times, Jim Asher's 'A-position' session would be great here.)
2. A core session, using a yoga posture where the person is sitting with legs out to the side, the so-called 'Z position'. Hopefully this result shoots right up the front part of the spine and into the torso, recapitulating elements of the goals of sessions four, five, and six of the Ten Series.
3. Then comes a torso session, which continues up into the head and neck, and

may include the classic front-to-back 'L session', an outstanding part of a riff on the goals of the Ten Series' sessions seven and eight.

4. The fourth session of that series was a recapitulation of the goals of sessions nine and ten of the basic Ten Series, and could include horizontalizing, joint work, all kinds of balance as needed.

So the original Advanced Series had the same goals as the basic Ten Series? If so, why bother?

'Why bother' is because once someone has been through a Ten Series, hopefully including the functional processes of Rolf Movement, things are different. There is a deeper level presented. And by 'deeper', I definitely do not mean 'deep-tissue-massage' level. We are talking about the way the deepest rotations can come out after a while, *even though* we have observed that clients tend to get better over a year's time after their Ten Series. Unexamined scientifically as yet, there seems to be a structure/movement force for good in the body reflecting and amplifying the original Ten Series, sort of a homeostasis of structure/movement that lasts for about the first year after the Series is completed.

However, even with this functional/structural homeostasis, gravity doesn't stop when someone leaves my office after the Ten Series goals of Roling SI and Rolf Movement (which I include with my structural work) have been fulfilled. The person's 'handedness', 'footedness', and perceptual preferences (e.g., 'earedness' and 'eyedness') don't change that much, though the person may have eased out in his devotion to one-sidedness in the original Ten Series. This means that the deepest parts of body function that provide the structure are bubbling up and presenting themselves to be worked with.

Also, think of some of those deeper levels past the use patterns of nervous system

dominance: the liver is cooking away on the right side of your torso and the stomach on the left – and these organs are busy providing structural segmentation as well. And then as well as the visceral we have histories of head injuries, the scar tissue of various slings and arrows of fate, and bones themselves actually twisted in function (including their immediate wrapping, the periosteum) according to their devotion to internal or external rotation, congruent or non-congruent.

All this is grist for the mill of the Advanced Training (AT), and working with these issues in the class of a couple of master teachers and orchestrators of the human condition is a life- and practice-changing class for many Rolfers, including me. Of course, these days the Roling Advanced Series is not codified in session numbers, much less limited to four sessions, although many clients can get a huge step ahead in a five-session series. The number of sessions is not set in stone for either the basic or advanced work when we are talking about the *goals* of the work.

A Rolfer can certainly do good work as a new Rolfer, or even as a Rolfer who has delayed taking the AT. The beginning and intermediate teaching at the Rolf Institute® of the structural and movement work of integration is unmatched in any school that I know of. And yet, the intermediate work (garnered from continuing education workshops) and the advanced work of the AT allows us to individualize the work of orchestration, integration, in such a profound way. I've taken the AT twice and might do it again. I'm still learning from Rolfers who can take the time to work out courses, and I regularly call upon my attendance at continuing education workshops to provide inspiration as well. But the unique distinctions learned in the AT over that time remain in a class unto themselves, a siren song of structure and function.

Linda Grace, Certified Advanced Rolfer and Rolf Movement Practitioner, has had a full-time practice in Philadelphia since 1984 and is an approved mentor for the Rolf Institute® in both structural and movement integration. She is on the Institute's Board of Directors and has also been active for the organization in the Northeast Region. Linda has done many Roling SI presentations at varying conferences and schools, including medical and music schools. Most recently she presented programs for the International Association of Bassists and for the Juilliard School conducting program under the direction of Alan Gilbert.