

A Vision for Humanity

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May 19, 1896 - March 19, 1979

Like so many teachers, I complain that people do not seem to understand my basic goals, the fundamental purposes for which Rolfing has been developed. In an effort to lessen this type of frustration, I offer the following summary of Rolfing ideas, purposes, and developments.

First, let me reiterate what I have often said before: I, as an individual, am not primarily interested in the relief of symptoms, either physical or mental. To hear Rolfees tell of the "wonderful", "unbelievable" symptom alleviation they experience, it seems extravagant not to accept symptom alleviation as a major goal. However, I personally am interested in the potential of humans, and human potential per se neither includes nor excludes the palliation of symptoms.

As of today, Rolfing is being accepted as one of the most basic, one of the most reliable means of developing whatever potential is latent in any given human, psychological as well as physical. By what route did Rolfing reach this particular eminence? We assume human beings are, as a species, evolving toward verticality. What intellectual considerations speed us on our way toward understanding the value of this verticality?

There can be no argument that the bony structure is less subject to capricious change than soft tissue. Rolfees have heard me say over and over that the bones, per se, are not the basic determinants of body structure, that the organ of structure is the collagen "body" of connective, so called "soft" tissue. Bones are where they are and as they are to separate and stabilize the softer tissues which, in point of fact, play the more significant role in physical organization. In spite of this, bones

must be recognized as relatively stable, fundamental elements of structure. As we observe the blueprint of the bones, it becomes increasingly apparent that the softer tissues need to be in certain patterned relations to each other for the bones to perform their role most effectively as separating and particularly as relating elements. Thus, joints attain a highly significant place in the body economy.

Now, the important question which I asked many years ago, and to which I am still seeking an answer, is this: What kind of organism will develop if these body parts are appropriately related? What happens when soft tissue and related bone structure actually function in the positions in space which their architectural design suggests as most appropriate and which contributes most effectively to establishing the vertical? The vertical in man's structure is the outcome of his proprioceptive, sensory appreciation of the gravity pull of the earth. Unconsciously, as well as consciously, he feels this pull and responds to it.

There is a subtle but compelling concept involved here: intellectual formation can, and in this place does, arise out of sensory awareness; man's appreciation of the vertical evolves from his perception of the energy field, the gravity pull, of the earth. Our generation is beginning to appreciate that we have here a touchstone which can be taken into all parts of our world of ideas. We are finding that we can evaluate the validity of some intellectual concepts through information received from our senses as well as from that coming from our intellects.

Humans have always developed in the gravity pull of the earth and

still live within it. They must make their peace with this field of energy. To the extent that they fail to make peace and mistakenly carry on the war, gravity wins every time. The energy of this field can enhance or dissipate the energy of the individual man. You cannot change the position of the energy field of the earth, in space, but you can change the energy field of the man.

The question remains: to what extent could Rolfees create a small population able to live within the gravity field without an on-going, everlasting war, without the constant expenditure of precious human energy merely to carry on life within the gravity field? If we could create such a population, what would be its characteristics? I am not interested solely in physical structure, although that is really of basic importance especially in terms of physiological well-being. What will be the psychological and emotional characteristics, the behavior both of the individual and of a group composed of such individuals? How would these more vertical, demonstrably more conscious individuals compare with the random, less conscious humans who tread the surface of the earth today?

Is it perhaps too far-fetched to wonder whether one of the taproots of human aggression and its underlying fear may be the continuous sense of insecurity which random humans unconsciously feel with reference to their gravity environment? This emotional response is called forth very early in life probably with the first attempt at verticality (standing), and certainly with the first walking steps. Many psychological and behavioral aberrations are thought to arise from causes less basic than this.

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Be that as it may, I see no means of gaining answers to these suggestive and really important questions in the abstract. The answer will come when we can create such a population and observe it over an extended period. At this point, we are justified only in looking with satisfaction at the reports coming in from people who have experienced some approach to the integrating vertical. The appropriate integration of the bodies of man in the gravity field is a long-term evolutionary project. Not even the first page has yet been turned. It is possible that we are seeing here the first conscious attempt at evolution made by any species in modern times.

Reprinted from a late 1977 edition of Rolf Lines. This letter/article was evidently one of the first drafts of what was later to be published as the article entitled "The Vertical - Experiential Side To Human Potential".

