

A Brief Interview with Peter Melchior

by Bill Harvey

Bill: When I got up after being Rolfed by you, I had the sense that not only had you handled the immediate issue, but that you had looked ahead and considered those issues too. Not only did you handle the present, you anticipated complications which could arise from present conditions.

Peter: I don't know if that is how I would say it. I do sometimes see things that are potential and handle them.

Bill: ????????

Peter: There is something that began to happen to me a while back that may lead to this way of working. There came a time when I'd look at a client and fancy that I could see a sort of track. I'd be looking at this person here and now, and down the line this way and that way: "past" and "present". There were images of a timeless place where I could stand and see the other person's time track. I didn't know what I was talking about, of course, but I would look at a little kid, and I would begin to realize that if nothing were done to correct the present pattern, it would look like this in the adult. Then, when I would begin to work, I would evaluate what I was doing, not by the present effects, but with an eye to how this pattern might develop differently than it would have without my intervention. With children, it is quite clear that you are not coming in and fixing a set pattern. You just sort of come up along-side them and nudge them a little bit, to make a small correction in the course of development. You can begin to see when they are on track and when they have strayed from the blueprint.

Ida loved working on kids. One day she grabbed hold of Susan in the supermarket. Susan was carrying Theron, who was about four months old at the time. Dr. Rolf says, "Bring that baby in to see me at once! This afternoon!" Susan sweats it out until four, not knowing what it is all about, then shows up at the place. (We were having a teachers' class.) Susan holds Theron, and Ida begins to work a little at his lumbar section, and the kid's feet drop that much (indicating three inches); and I said, "What happened to my kid?" Ida asked me, "Why did I decide this baby needed work?" I gave a tremendously penetrating dissertation. Ida said, "NO! It was because he didn't look four months old." She worked this way all the time. She would have a vision of where a child should be, right now, along his or her track, and where it would go if no one took care of this little item. So this began to happen to me in the course of my work, spontaneously, after I had been working about ten years. I would be looking at someone, and suddenly seeing these successive images of what I took to be possibilities - like alternate tracks into the future. I thought, "If I change this just this much, how is this going to look down the road a piece?" Then, little by little. I began to deliberately try to develop this sense. I was scared at first. I didn't really want anything to do with all this. But I began to recognize that it is a useful tool, even if I couldn't explain it. I can't explain electricity either, but I use it. □

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