PERSPECTIVE

The Electromagnetic Approach to Rolfing®

By Deborah Stucker, Certified Advanced Rolfer

THE BASICS

I have been asked to explain what I mean by "direct electromagnetic Rolfing." Here is a more or less off-the-cuff explanation.

The bodymind is not so much material as materializing. Structure does not exist independently of bioelectric activity, it only appears to in death and dissection. Moreover, living structure as such is a coherent consciousness. It is metamorphic within the context of the physics of bioelectricity.

The work I've been doing treats directly with bioelectric conduction of the body by engaging with structural consciousness and by neutralizing the residual inertia of structure so that conduction is made more coherent or synchronized. The engagement and the neutralization activities are mutually reinforcing.

All living structure is bioelectric, therefore all structure is included in this direct address. Bioelectric activity is organized by aggregate structures: by atoms, by muscles, by organism, e.g. Each aggregate must be integrated at the organizational level in order to persist as a new characteristic of the aggregate.

Structural consciousness, or the self-awareness of the protoplasm, understands itself by reading pressures, both internal and external. It does so in the context of its felt sense of polarity, which establishes the axial direction, up/down. It senses when pressure occurs and where. From this it forms a composite of its relationship to space. In fact, from the sub-atomic to the organismic level, structure is a formation of space where it derives its necessary tensegrity for existence.

Structure must relate to space in such a way as to result in bioelectric conduction. A key part of the consciousness of structure is its understanding of how it must move to bring conduction about, should conduction not be possible through sub-atomic movement alone. This understanding rises in consciousness through the various brain organizations' ideation which bring about the necessary movements (see Jason W. Brown and his theory of the microgenesis of consciousness). I believe that this is the appropriate context for our ongoing discussions about the interplay of connective tissue and neurology.

A Rolfer can affect change by creating electromagnetic events which alter the patterns of conduction. All Rolfing does this. This method simply isolates the touch to speak directly into this organization of structure. It is very simple to do and has fairly dramatic results. EM Rolfing uses the 10-series as a means of organizing the bodymind at the component and solid-state levels.

The Rolfer takes advantage of the ways in which the bodymind reads electromagnetism: the space and time relations of embodiment (when and where things are happening, which are the factors of entrained conduction patterns) and the sense of weight. This method of Rolfing orients the client, not to any particular formation, especially not to any conceived "ideal" formation, but to the absolutes of formation itself.

The rise in structural consciousness achieved when the client is in possession of this non-intellectual, non-imaging information empowers the bodymind to abandon attachment to form. The perception of internal and external space becomes the constant of consciousness, rather than the perception of internal and external form which characterizes the predominantly neurological bodymind. All of this is thoroughly based in established science, as Jim Oschman and those he has studied will tell you.

OBJECTIONS

I have had several objections centered on my use of the term "EM Rolfing" — whether it is correct serivce mark usage, and whether it can even be called Rolfing since it sounds like it's not hands-on. Let me reply to these.

I must have been quite unclear in my writing about this approach to leave the impression that it is not a hands-

on practice. The body is "what we can get our hands on," as IPR said. Implied in this comment is that there is an aspect to human physicality which is integral to it yet immaterial, and which can be accessed through the "body" per se. I have simply tried to study how the immaterial can be observed or deduced through the material and vice-versa, and have developed a technology which interacts in the "materializing" moment. Hands on.

I am not, however, touching "muscles." These are aggregate structures with solid state properties of their own, which include characteristic brain activity high up in the brain-structure hierarchy. I want to enter the bodymind at a much earlier phase of consciousness, at the amoebic mind, in the protoplasm, where cognition begins to "fix" the indetermination of quantum events into the action sequence of perception and the formation of "self" begins.

There is an interesting illusion among some of the membership that electromagnetism has no place in Rolfing. How can it not? All matter is electromagnetic! IPR herself stated to Dr. Valerie Hunt that "the future of Rolfing is electromagnetism." In the preface to *Rolfing, The integration of Human Structures*, Dr. Rolf quotes Norbert Weiner: "We are not stuff that abides but patterns that perpetuate themselves." On page 16, Dr. Rolf says, "The message of this medium — the body — is energy." On page 17, "Help must be sought in terms of the problem — in the physics of spatial relations, of man in his environment, of man-as-a-whole in the energy field of the earth, gravity." On page 29, "Invariably, in matter, appropriate order is more economical of energy than disorder." On page 30, "This primary subdivision of physics concerns itself with the effect of Earth's energy envelope (its gravitational field) on so-called 'material particles' and their aggregates. For these particles are not merely 'material'; they, too, are energy fields. All aggregates of matter manifest energy at some level." Page 31, "In its most elemental physical aspect, the human body differs little from other aggregations of matter, even the inorganic. Thus the behavior of an inorganic substance such as salt...can be more reliably evaluated if the atoms are seen as energy fields, patterned miniature solar systems whirling in balanced orbits." Aren't we into reliable evaluations?

There has been a lot of thinking, writing and research since Dr. Rolf (and Rosemary Feitis) wrote this book. Are we not to avail ourselves of it to further investigate Dr. Rolf's ideas?

As far as what I am calling this work — in my practice, I have been calling it Rolfing (with the service mark). When I first debuted this approach at the 1997 annual meeting I spoke on "Practical Palintonics: Getting the Hang of Gravitation." In 1998, I spoke at the ERA meeting with "Metamorphosis: Working Directly with Bioelectric Conduction." I wrote a huge, rambling paper which I inflicted on only a few poor understanding souls entitled, "Structure: System of Support and Perception." My point is that I don't care what it is called. I am distinguishing it from other approaches to draw attention to the electromagnetic nature of ALL Rolfing. Creating electromagnetic events through "muscles" is indirectly electromagnetic. Creating "muscle" events (changing their solid state characteristics of shape and energy conduction) by creating electromagnetic events is direct. Within both methods are indirect and direct techniques. So there is an indirect direct electromagnetic approach, e.g.

We are most of us familiar with more traditional direct and indirect techniques of working with myofascia. The trouble is that, while we have many different methods and approaches for the work we all share, we make no overt distinctions (unless one of the methods becomes a distinct school, such as Aston Patterning). Rolfing influenced by, say, Peter Levine's work is very different from that influenced by Hans Flury. Our "legacy school" tradition, however, demands that we forge ahead as though unified. We run into trouble when we try to come up with a single explanation for what we do. Theorectical disputes are usually resolved by community members parting company with the Institute, a lamentable state of affairs for the free exchange of information and insight.

The appearance of unity does not mean that our work is not practiced diversely. I've attended some classes in which something like soft chiropractic was being taught! Called it Rolfing just the same, though.

I have been personally stimulated to investigate the ways I think that "gravity is the therapist" in RSI because of my alarm at the growing notion that release of fixation equates to integration. Unity of discourse may have had its place while Dr. Rolf was alive. She was in a position of stating definitively what Rolfing was and was not. In her absence, I find the semblance of unified discourse premature. There are (by 11!) over a thousand of us now! We ought to structure ourselves so that the 1011 ideas about what this work encompasses can be considered, in order that we might discover what the true unifying ideas might be. Not all 1011 ideas are going to break new ground but many of them might. We are not going to find out what they are until we shift our focus from trying to rally behind charismatic leader-teachers as

a means of preserving the appearance of cohesion to an examination and organization of the work as a collection of ideas. I am currently interested in interrogating the human use of space for physical form and conscious awareness. Call it whatever you like!

ADAPTABILITY

The point has been made that "what we are discussing is a continuum from very rapidly adapting tissue, nerve and muscle, through more slowly adapting tissue, fascia and other similar tissues, and on to very slowly adapting tissue such as bone." I don't think that this is an accurate assessment of adaptability.

Space travel has demonstrated that when the conduction of bioelectricity is altered by a change in pressure conditions, bone, fascia, etc. change is mighty rapid. I believe that we base our notions of change on results of interventions which address structures like bone and fascia in the aggregate. This kind of touch maintains a lot of structural behavior as givens, which are actually up for grabs at the level of the components. Much of our idea of adaptability comes from how long it takes for aggregate structures to heal, but I think this is due to the compromise in their integrity, not to the adaptability of the material itself.

The neuromuscular organization might actually be seen as resistant to change since muscle organization, which includes its innervation, in its solid state is imprinted psychologically. Addressed in the aggregate or solid state through touch, the neuromuscular organization engages character structures which defend against alteration. ❑