

~~Body Zen. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010.~~

~~2. For a more in-depth approach to Kant's aesthetics than I can provide here, see my article, "An Ontology of Appreciation: Kant's Aesthetics and the Problem of Metaphysics" in the Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology 13:1 January 1982, pp. 45-68.~~

~~3. In Chapters Ten and Eleven, we will return to the notions of embodiment~~

~~and homecoming by investigating the experience of the seasoned manual therapist in love with his work. In an effort to further deepen our understanding of these matters, we will continue to uncover and elucidate their numinous dimension. In Chapter Eight we will introduce the idea that the body is sentient.~~

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# Burning Man

## An Interview with Michael Salveson, Part 1

**By Szaja Gottlieb, Certified Advanced Rolfer™ and Michael Salveson, Advanced Rolfing® Instructor**

[Editor's Note: Advanced Rolfing Instructor Michael Salveson has been an integral part of the Rolf Institute®. He was chosen by Dr. Rolf as one of five to help transmit her work. He has many times been a contributor to this Journal, particularly about the importance of the Advanced Training and topics in Advanced Rolfing Structural Integration (SI). In March 2005 (vol. 33, issue 1), the Journal published "The Advanced Class," and in September 2008 (vol. 36, issue 3), "A Lecture from the April 2008 Advanced Rolfing Training." Though this interview includes comments and views about the Advanced Training, there is also an exploration of his own process since he became a Rolfer. This interview took place in summer 2015 at Salveson's home in Berkeley, California a few days before he left for the Burning Man gathering. This is the first part of the interview; Part 2 will be published in a future issue.)

**Szaja Gottlieb:** As practitioners we know that Rolfing Structural Integration (SI) is transformational for the client, but we also know that it is transformational for the practitioner as well. I wonder if you could speak about your personal journey? First, how long have you been a Rolfer?

**Michael Salveson:** I have been a Rolfer since 1968. I suppose you could say that my journey began when I decided against a career in the military. I was raised in the military and brought up to be an officer. When I completed high school, I received appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis from Vice President Lyndon Johnson and to the U.S. Air Force academy from my state senator, Mark Hatfield.

**SG:** What changed?

**MS:** I had a premonition when I received the acceptance telegrams that I had done this before. It was very strange. The result was that I said, I can't do this, and I turned them down. It made things very difficult. My father was a soldier. I was a very good student, but it was last minute and I didn't

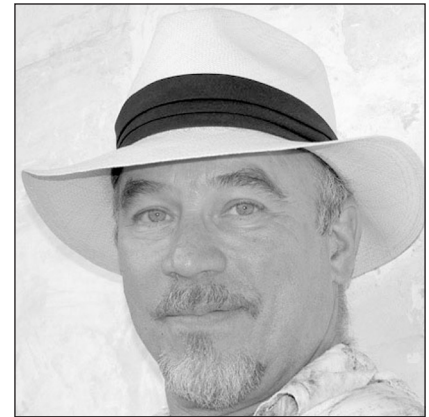
have a chance to apply to other schools. I wound up at the University of Oregon since I had received some scholarships there. It became apparent to me right away that I wasn't comfortable. It was as if I was on a quest. I didn't know what I was looking for, but I knew I was looking for something I did not have. A lot of my responses at that time were "no" – no to the military, no to this, no to that . . . I didn't know what to say yes to.

**SG:** I've experienced that, a very difficult and frustrating situation.

**MS:** Eventually I wound up in San Francisco and I discovered philosophy. That was the first time I had fallen love with an academic domain. It was like water to a man in the desert. I was so hungry for what philosophy offered me.

**SG:** Of course, since philosophy means love of wisdom.

**MS:** Yes, love of wisdom. In the process, I sorted my way through Western philosophical traditions, became very interested in Eastern religion, and spent time with a Brahman scholar from Patna



Michael Salveson



Szaja Gottlieb

University. I spent a lot of time on the mind-body problem and was very interested in psychoanalysis.

**SG:** What year are we talking about?

**MS:** 1965, 1966. I was living in the Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco. The psychedelic world was happening. It was a very exciting time and place. I was involved in that world. My studies at this time were focused on early mind-body issues and the work of Freud and Wilhelm Reich. I was

increasingly interested in my studies with Anil Sarkar from Patna University in India and lived in the library reading Advaita Vedanta treatises. I was absolutely taken by the idea that, in the traditional education of a Brahman, one could not truly understand the nature of reality without perfecting or cultivating the body. Only with a body cultivated by dedicated practice could the eye of perception be trusted as the basis for wisdom. That was when I discovered hatha yoga, the meditative practices of Vedic Hinduism, and ultimately the roots that went into Buddhist practices.

**SG:** This all led to Roling SI I take it.

**MS:** I had a friend who also studied with this Brahman scholar. He got a job teaching tai chi at Esalen. One night, he called me and said: "Michael, you have to come down here. There's a woman visiting here and she is doing some sort of work with the body. She is talking about stuff that you've been talking about. You should come down and meet her." That was Ida Rolf. I went down to Esalen and watched her do demos. As I watched her I realized: "Oh, I know exactly what she is doing. I know how to do that. I can do that." It was the strangest feeling, that not only could I do it, but I realized that everything I had done, from the rejection of a military career, the journey into philosophy, [to] my interest in the mind-body problem and Vedic philosophy, had been unconsciously preparing me to do something I didn't even know existed.

**SG:** What happened then?

**MS:** I arranged to sit next to her at dinner. We were chatting. I said I was interested in what she was doing. She said, "Well, what's your background." I told her. She replied, "You need some premed, some anatomy." I said, "Absolutely, I'll do that." I went back to the University of California and took anatomy and physiology. I also realized I needed to get practice with my hands and actually got a job as a masseur at the Oakland Athletic Club, where the Oakland Raiders worked out. I was the masseur for George Blanda, who was the Raiders' forty-year-old placekicker and quarterback. He was a phenomenon that year, and the NFL Most Valuable Player. An article in *Sports Illustrated* about him mentioned that he got a massage from me every week before a game. My time practicing massage to prepare me for studying with Ida got me mentioned in *Sports Illustrated*.

**SG:** Must have been hard to give up.

**MS:** Not really. Ida wanted me to come into a class she was teaching and I told her, "You know, I am not ready." I postponed it. Later, I wound up taking the first class, the auditing class, that was taught by Peter [Melchior], Emmett [Hutchins], and Ida together. Initially, I had resistance to a certain aspect of this work. I felt like it put me at the edges of society. I could have been a high-prestige soldier and now I was doing something that people hadn't heard of, very fringy. And there was something lonely about it to me. I was resisting it. I actually had a series of visions. One night I woke up and there was a huge woman beside my bed. The message was "You have to do this." Also, at night, I heard digging under my house. The message was the same, "You have to do this." I thought I was going crazy. I have to say that it has been a source of consternation to me that my life has unfolded in a way that has seemed inevitable, that I had limited choices, that there was a momentum driving me and even pushing me.

**SG:** How did you resolve your turmoil?

**MS:** Fortunately, I was in Jungian analysis, so I could work through this. I had a dream that I had to go through a parking lot full of Hell's Angels and go out into the desert. That was where I had to go, out there to be alone, because what I had to do required that I be comfortable being alone. That settled me. Having said all that, you know that the tradition of the healer as the wounded one has mythic origins.

**SG:** Roling work must have had a profound effect on you.

**MS:** I certainly carried my wounds. I wore braces on my legs as a child. Even though I was a very good athlete, I couldn't slow dance without screaming pain, and I was having sciatica at eighteen. Stan Johnson was my first Rolfer. He was a young MD who Ida had trained. He was living in a beautiful house in Big Sur. My experience was profound. I got better. I knew Roling work could help me.

In the beginning of my practice, I struggled with what I knew was my own suffering and the way in which it both limited and empowered me as a Rolfer. Ida, as you know, though a scientist, was also involved in esoteric studies. She sent me to a very good psychic, Anne Armstrong in Sacramento. When I walked in, she looked at me and said, "You are a healer." I replied, "I'm a Rolfer, I don't know if I am a healer."

She said, "No, you are. The unusual thing is that you have the ability to heal yourself." She then said: "And that's a good thing." She recognized I had some real work to do on myself. I have to say that my path as a Rolfer has been shaped by my teachers, Ida being the principal one. Also, by the journey of my own self-healing. And if there is any power in my work, that's where it comes from.

**SG:** What other practices were involved in your self-healing?

**MS:** I looked outside the Roling domain for a lot of my healing. I was in Jungian analysis for fifteen years. I'm a thirty-year student of chi gong. When I discovered Taoism and chi gong, it was like finding the wiring diagram to my hard drive. It made immediate sense to me and it allowed me to capture what been a problematic experience and use it for my own healing. I have always felt energy moving in my body. At times it was anxiety-provoking, as it seemed to be out of my control. Studying with [Bruce] Kumar Frantzis, my Taoist teacher, taught me that this energy was an asset and all I had to do was to learn something about the archetypes that governed its circulation. A lot of what has transpired since is the unwinding of deep strain patterns in me, which has been a consequence of contacting an inner flow, and then surrendering to that inner flow and letting it move, and then consciously absorbing the direction of that flow.

**SG:** When you started practicing Roling SI, you must have been aware of that flow.

**MS:** I was but it was unformed, very, very unformed. The traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism all have central concepts of an internal flow of energy, which has implications for both health and spiritual development. There is no corollary in Western thought. We don't have a concept of internal flow other than what most recently had come from Reich and the bioenergetic practitioners. We don't have a concept of *chi* or *prana*. It was alive in me. That was very clear. Getting confirmation allowed me to validate it and allow it to do its work. It is still a living process within me. In all of those schools, that internal flow of sensation is cultivated and goes through stages of refinement and then moves, not only to fortify the physical body, but unfolds our subtle nature, if we practice in a tradition that teaches internal cultivation of this energy.

Having that begin to flower started happening with me about five years ago and has had a very big influence on my work. One of the reasons that I stopped teaching advanced [Rolfing] classes was because I felt I needed time to be with my own process in my Rolfing room, to have the freedom, to not have external preoccupations, external constraints, so that I could allow this to develop, begin to understand it and see where it would lead me.

One of the classic questions of Advanced Rolfing classes – “Where do you start, what do you do next, and how do you know you are finished?” – requires access to all the practitioner’s sources of information. Then, the question becomes, “Where to get your information? What are the sources that give you the information you need?” Obviously, we look with our eyes. We see structure. We feel with our hands. We palpate tissue densities. We observe movement patterns and preferences. I have always used continuity of energetic flow as an indicator of both where I need to work and whether or not my work has created a level of continuity that allows me to consider that I have closure for a session.

**SG:** Is that something you feel when clients get up, or you feel towards the end of a session?

**MS:** I feel it all the time and I don’t have to have my hands on them to do it. It’s just a presence, my presence interacting with them.

**SG:** Is that the result of forty-seven years of Rolfing [practice]?

**MS:** I think so, combined with my internal work and the presence of the flow. My personal suffering is not as much of an issue now. I’m seventy years old. I’ve been at it for a long time. Now, there is space for this phenomenon to happen.

**SG:** Craft becomes art if you practice it every day at the level you are doing it. It becomes instinctive rather than mechanical.

**MS:** That’s right. However, it’s very interesting that the profundity of the result cannot be produced by just the energetic perception. If you talk to my clients, they will tell you, “Michael hurts.” I am not a painless Rolfer. I was at a party with several people who had been my clients and I heard somebody ask: “What’s it like when Michael is working on you?” That someone looked

at me and he said: “It’s like a dog chewing on a bone.”

**SG:** I remember you, of course.

**MS:** I work deeply. I allow tissue to melt under my fingers, but I reach in. The great development in my work occurred when I realized I was not going to refer my [clients] to a chiropractor in order to mobilize the cervical vertebrae. I was going to do it myself. It took a long time to figure out how to do that without using a high-velocity thrust, to achieve a way of doing it that was completely consistent with the way I put my hands on people as a Rolfer. This led me to what I called the ligamentous bed and the realization that what structures joints is tonus in the ligaments. You can’t get your fingers on the ligaments, but you can get your hands on the bone, and you move the bones in order to symmetrically release the ligaments. When that happens, a feeling of melting and spaciousness occurs at the joint surfaces.

**SG:** I remember a scene from our Advanced Training (AT) in 2008. You may not remember it, but it affected me profoundly. It was lunchtime and you were trying to help a student with a lower back and sacral issue. She was lying on the table and you put your hand under her sacrum, barely moving. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes passed. I saw the sweat starting to soak your shirt. I thought to myself, whoa, no matter how good you get, it’s still work, you can’t get around that. Maybe somebody knows how to do this better or quicker . . . maybe, but very often it’s simply blue-collar stuff. You just have to get down and do the work.

**MS:** I totally agree. There’s a lot being done that passes for Rolfing work that I believe does not deliver the level of results that Rolfing [sessions are] capable of delivering. The question is, how profound of a result is acceptable to you in the session? A little bit of improvement or a lot, how deep and far does the work reach into someone? There’s an entire spectrum of what can be done to a body to move it towards what we call integration or the ‘Line’. It could be a tiny little movement toward integration or it could be a world-shattering session that produces an email from your client that says: “That last session completely transformed both the way I feel and the way I look at the world.” Every session does not produce ‘world-changing’ results. Those crucial sessions are usually the result of consistent, tissue-changing sessions that

preceded them. I have never been able to find anyone who could produce results like that without doing a significant amount of real work, changing tissue.

**SG:** What about length of session? Personally, I cannot do our work in sixty-to seventy-minute sessions, which are, I hear, becoming the norm. Sometimes, for me, things start happening at the seventy-minute mark. I do remember a particular session in our Unit 3 when you were working on someone past the allotted time. Members of the class began looking around, particularly at the clock, and then you said: “We are like artists, we don’t go by the clock.” I think sometimes practitioners have to understand that that’s the way it works.

**MS:** I agree with you. It’s all about the style in which you practice. I think you can do a very good piece of work in sixty minutes. Jan Sultan is the perfect example of a profound Rolfer who works within a clearly defined time limit. I schedule my people an hour and a half apart. I hate to be rushed. At this stage of my life, I hate to be under time pressure. Most of the time my sessions take me less than the allotted time, but often I say to myself, “I need to go up to the neck and release the cranial base. That will be another twenty minutes, but the quality of the result will be compounded dramatically.”

**SG:** Are you going to teach again?

**MS:** Probably. If I teach, my next class will probably be a post-advanced class.

**SG:** Post advanced?

**MS:** In order to get into the class, you will have to have taken the AT. The advanced Rolfing faculty is moving in this direction. Ida always said: “We don’t have enough time to really train people.” That’s one of the reasons she invented the ‘Recipe’. “Follow the Recipe. Go out and practice for five years. Learn what it takes to put a body together.” Unfortunately, it hasn’t worked quite like that. Now, with all the distractions in bodywork, people leave our training and do ‘hands off the body’, energy work, or other indirect modalities, which distracts them from understanding how to really move tissue, which I think is the all-important domain of experience that a Rolfer needs to be familiar with. There are no substitutes for being able to change tissue.

One idea being considered is that the [AT] become almost like a ‘Unit 4’, with

no prerequisites. This is all in discussion. The idea is to make it easier to come into the advanced class, get the instructors more time with people in hands-on tissue-changing mode before they go out and get distracted by a lot of ancillary techniques. That also means the advanced class reverts a little bit to more basic issues, because they are not going to have all the prerequisites as before. That means now having a post-advanced class make a little more sense.

**SG:** Is part of the thinking here, from what I understand, that graduates from other schools may be allowed to apply for the AT at the Rolf Institute?

**MS:** There is something in the works but I trust that it will be done in a way that doesn't subvert our own training. In fact, the requirements should be such that it would be harder to get into the Institute by going around our Basic Training than it is to go through our Basic Training. It will be possible, but it will be more difficult and more expensive. I think it's very important to maintain our standards, as structural integration is becoming more generic, more watered down, and the quality of the work that's being done under the rubric of structural integration looks less and less like real Rolfing work.

**SG:** Do you find that ironic, considering all the scientific stuff coming out, the fascial research, supporting our perspective and concepts? We should be more grounded. The work, in a sense, should be so much stronger.

**MS:** Right. You said earlier Rolfing sessions are a lot of work. It is human nature that people are always looking for an easier way. A lot of people don't want to do the hard work. Also, you can't really have a Rolfing practice for thirty years and not have your body break down, unless you have an efficacious program of self-care. You have to train like an athlete. You have to have some form of personal care that preserves your own structure, your own vitality.

**SG:** Do you think that is why our numbers don't increase greatly over time?

**MS:** It's too hard, too much work.

**SG:** Hard work but a well-paying manual-labor job.

**MS:** I'm blue collar.

**SG:** But so rewarding.

**MS:** Extremely rewarding.

**SG:** Going back to the beginning of our conversation about the transforming experience that Rolfing work offers, is that the reason some people refer to us as a 'mystery school'? How do we make that experience available to a client who is coming in with let's say a back problem, but he is unaware of the larger context of his problem?

**MS:** Unaware of the back problem?

**SG:** Very aware of the back problem but not that there is another potential reality that may be accessible to him through our work. I recently had a client come in after an initial session. The first thing he said to me was, "Why didn't you tell me?" "Tell you what?" "All this emotional stuff came up during the week." "Well," I said, "I feel funny talking about it on the phone when prospective clients call. It's not the '60s or '70s. I'm afraid to scare people away. They don't know me. They don't even know what Rolfing work is." How can we help people access all that we are offering?

**MS:** My experience is all you have to do is treat the back problem and proceed on the path to integration. When you put your hands on someone and begin to solve the issues that are associated with the back pain, something is going to happen because of the way we work. I'm not a chiropractor. I'm not going to go in and put [the client on his] side and do a high-velocity thrust to mobilize the vertebrae. I'm going to go in and parse out the soft tissue, then I'm going to go down and start to work with the ligaments. When that happens, there's a spreading that occurs that's indigenous to the body.

There's an energetic spreading. There's a fluidic spreading. There's a pulsatory spreading into the craniosacral system, and that triggers the nervous system in a way that no other mode of intervention does. There is a reorganization in the coordination system. That's just an absolutely predictable, inevitable consequence of how a Rolfer works. That's why it is so profound. When I met Ida, it was very clear to me that I'm probably not going to meet another person of her stature in my lifetime. She was a real teacher. She was driven by a scientific and spiritual impulse. She explored all kinds of esoteric avenues. It was part of what she brought to the table. It was that magnetism that potentiated her and her work and drew students of the '60s who were looking for the body as a doorway to spiritual

development. The body is a doorway to emotional unwinding, to the release of emotional suffering, and consequently to spiritual development. Rolfing work has been that from the beginning; it's inherent in our work.

**SG:** My concern is that the time we live in is much different than the time when Rolfing SI was founded. Clients call us but almost always for a pain issue, not to go through some transformational process. Often, after the first session, they immediately comment, "I feel lighter." And I reply, half seriously: "That's right because I am en-lightening you." I want to get them to start thinking of possibilities beyond their issue or pain.

**MS:** It's tricky because people come in at different levels of preparation and development. We can't say, "We are going to do this." We go to work and simply provide the container and the space for something to happen.

**SG:** Without the psychology, we still have to be a bit psychological in the sense that you have to size up your client when he walks in – what are his needs, where is he coming from?

**MS:** You have to know what the [person is] capable of.

**SG:** I would like to turn to the concept of lineage in our community, particularly our tradition. Rolfing practice is handed down not through textbooks but by teachers and mentors. When Rolfers talk about their training, they ask, "Who was your Unit 3 instructor?" or "Who did you do your AT with?" In terms of a Rolfer's education and development, this process is fundamental in providing a model, but also to align the Rolfer to his/her potential and his/her path.

**MS:** The virtue of what you laid out as lineage or oral tradition is that it captures the variability in the training. You have an established curriculum that all instructors at the basic and advanced level are responsible for teaching, but they will teach that curriculum according to their own character, their own level of development, and the way in which they practice in their studio. Now, an instructor is expected to rise above some of that subjectivity. If you can't, you will never be a great teacher. It's not about how you do it, it's about transmitting a body of knowledge that has been handed down by a community, and there has to be a fidelity to that. You can't just abandon

yourself to your subjective way of viewing the work. You can do that in your practice up of a point. You cross that point, you no longer are doing Rolwing sessions. As a teacher you have to be responsible for the curriculum, but there is a flavor, and that flavor comes through the teacher.

**SG:** Sometimes that presents a problem for some students, they didn't happen to find the right guy so to speak and the work does not resonate.

**MS:** That's right.

**SG:** When you were my instructor for my Unit 3, I knew I had found someone on my frequency and said to myself, "I'm going to take anything he offers." When you taught the AT in 2008 in Berkeley I felt very fortunate.

**MS:** When you think of what we are trying to teach, it's like teaching someone how to ride a bike. It's a physical skill. It's a presence. It transcends what any kind of document could present. Ida tried to delineate these layers of knowing by referring to Korzybski's general semantics, and she would eventually get down to what she called the 'silent level'. She said, "Basically, a lot of what we do as practitioners occurs on that silent level." The silent level is silent because as soon as you try to capture it in words or writing, you are, in some sense, changing or truncating it. The immediacy of the experience, that is the instructor's true job: to point to and to lead the student into a space where all of the knowledge that has been imparted to him can be applied in that silence, at that moment of immediacy, for the benefit of the client.

**SG:** I want to discuss the normal evolution of a Rolfer. I want to go back to a conversation we had in 2001 in the middle of our Unit 3. I went up to you during a break and said, "Michael, why are we learning spinal mechanics, I thought we are soft-tissue guys." You quickly replied, "Two reasons. First, you will be going there in a few years anyway. Second, if you can do this work, your practice will be full because your clients won't need to see a chiropractor." Of course, you were absolutely correct. For me the AT consolidated this pathway into the bones and, equally important, exposed me to a collegial atmosphere with other practicing Rolfers that brought a confidence to my work.

**MS:** The great virtue of the AT is that you are in a room in a clinical setting

with practitioners who are not beginners. Everyone is bringing their experience from their practice. It's a space where your exploration can go deeper. I think you are right that if you are really a Rolfer and you have your hands in the tissue, your natural curiosity will draw you deeper and deeper into a body as things present themselves.

**SG:** It's inevitable.

**MS:** When Jan and I started teaching the AT and the non-formulistic approach to Rolwing work, the idea was to open this up so that there is greater space for the experience of the practitioner to develop the knowledge that is useful at these deeper layers. That did involve essentially attempting to understand how the joints of the body worked as determined by the ligamentous bed. That's the deepest layer of the fascia. Ida said the first ten sessions are like peeling an onion. It's the safest way to proceed. But if someone asked me "What is the great weakness of the ten-session series?" I would say, "back work." It's very good to lengthen the extensors, but when you look at the complexity of the back, the layers of muscles, the small muscles, the layer of ligaments, the number of joints that are involved, the opportunity for compensation at that level is immense.

It's no mistake that almost all manipulative traditions have been devoted to mobilizing the spine. It is the central structure, and it is the place where, very often, because of its complexity, the trouble ends up. That's where the compensations lodge. Ida was aware of that when she said it was the realm "where angels fear to tread" – because if you go there directly and you start releasing the compensations, you are going to get a spread of decompensation in the body that could end in unhappiness and a phone call. You can't do that as a beginner. When you do it, you have to have the knowledge that will prepare you to deal with the spreading decompensation that could occur.

**SG:** The AT gives a Rolfer a chance to learn the work from inside out – instead of outside in as demonstrated in the Ten Series. You have the capacity to improvise and create. When the prospective client calls with back pain, what are you going to say, "Well, we will get to that in session six" – I don't think so. First of all, you won't feel right because there is a nagging feeling about clients in pain, an irritant.

**MS:** It's very interesting what you just said, because if I look at what happens in my

[Rolwing] room when I decide where I'm going to work, I am often making myself feel more comfortable. The client comes in, I'm in the room. The two of us are in there. There's an interaction going on right away. Some people come in, I really like them. Some people, I don't know. Some people, there's so much sadness there. This is a poetic license that I'm going to take right here. In some way – and there is some truth to this – what I do in the session is to make myself feel more comfortable by making [the client] more comfortable.

**SG:** Often at the end of a session, I joke with the client, "Oh, I feel so much better now." But it's actually the truth.

**MS:** How do I know where to work? I work over there because that is what is making me feel really uncomfortable. There's a fine line here, because we are not taking on [the client's] pain. We acknowledge the condition of the relationship that we are in; we can configure the space of the relationship so that everybody is more comfortable, myself included.

**SG:** Sometimes I tell clients that what's going on in the session is that I actually become an extension of their body and it's doing to itself what it wishes it could do.

**MS:** Ida used to talk like this all the time. She would say, "I can't stand the way your legs look. Lie down." I said, "What do you mean?" She replied, "Uncomfortable." She was uncomfortable with the way that person's legs worked. She would say stuff like that all the time, like, "Your palate is driving me crazy. Lie down."

**SG:** Doing this kind of work develops a special empathy in your body, a somatic empathy. You start feeling your clients as they walk through the door. I can only imagine how developed that is for someone who has been practicing for forty-seven years.

**MS:** You feel them, of course. We all feel and react to each other, mostly unconsciously. I want to make it clear, that there is a definite boundary here, and it's a very fine line. I would say most of the time my internal state is really not affected by what's going on with my clients, except for this notion that I'm vaguely uncomfortable with this or that about them. If they were better, I would feel better too.

I had to go through a time when I had to learn how to establish my boundaries clearly and separately from my clients,

while preserving a connection across those boundaries. That's well-ingrained in me now. There's no question that there's a permeability between Rolfer and client that can be both problematic and also immensely useful and influential. It is a question of making contact in a meaningful way while preserving our own organization. This is one of the fundamental aspects of psychological development, making contact while preserving one's own space.

*Michael Salvesson was educated in philosophy and religion, trained as a Rolfer by Dr. Rolf in 1969, trained as an Advanced Rolfer in the first AT Rolf taught, and trained by Rolf to be one of the five instructors of Rolwing SI she trained in her lifetime. Michael was President of the Rolf Institute from 1978 to 1982. He has been a practitioner of Taoist chi gong for twenty-five years. He is currently working to develop a coherent Rolwing approach to the ligamentous bed that controls movement and position of the articular surfaces of the body.*

*Szaja Gottlieb first received Rolwing sessions in 1978, which resulted in him becoming a stone sculptor, which, in turn, led to his becoming a Rolfer in 2001. He lives with his wife Ko and daughter Judith in Los Osos, California and practices in San Luis Obispo and Ventura. He believes in the transformational potency of SI.*

# ~~Allowing the Transformation To Emerge~~

## ~~An Interview with Tessy Brungardt~~

~~By Ray Allen, MFA, Certified Advanced Rolfer™ and Tessy Brungardt, Advanced Rolwing® Instructor, Rolf Movement® Practitioner~~

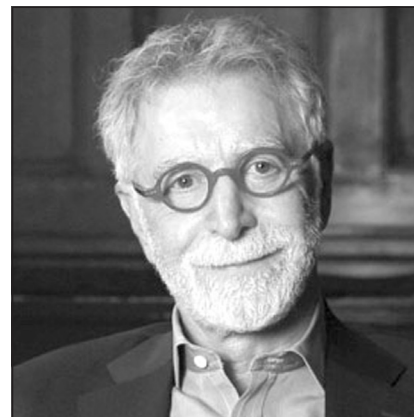
**Ray Allen:** ~~Could we start, Tessy, with you talking about your own personal history? What were the experiences that led to you getting Rolwing Structural Integration (SI) sessions and then deciding to become a Rolfer?~~

**Tessy Brungardt:** ~~Before I was a Rolfer I was a scientist—my degree is in environmental biology. I used to write environmental impact statements and do lots of natural history. I was outdoors all the time, but definitely working in a scientific mindset. But back when I was in high school I was a gymnast, and I hurt my back. My back hurt every day, more or less. I could manage it, but it was there all the time. At some point I started looking into the distant future, which in those days was thirty years old, and I thought, "I'm going to be really tired of this by then." I don't know what I thought about forty, fifty, or sixty years old, but I was thinking I'd be tired of this by age thirty.~~

~~Miraculously enough, I had a roommate who had tried Rolwing sessions. She told me about Rolwing SI, and it made sense to my scientific mind. I found a Rolfer in Florida, Jan Davis. She's deceased now, but she was a wonderful woman. I was twenty-three, and I was your worst client. Jan said, "Organize your structure" and "Ten Series," and I said, "Fix my back!" She said, "Get in alignment with gravity," and so forth, and I said, "Whatever, can you fix my back?" I would agree to anything on the possibility of that, so I did the Ten Series, and it did fix my back, but it did so many other things too. I became almost two inches taller, which is a lot. Now, I'm at the towering height of five feet, so that mattered. It changed my posture and how I oriented. It changed the shape of my face in a noticeable way. So I thought, "Okay, I've handled my body. Now I can go on about my business." Then I moved to California and had a chance to either start my environmental consulting business again or to do something else. As I was thinking about this I suddenly thought, "I want to be a Rolfer." It called~~



Tessy Brungardt



Ray Allen

~~me, something about it called me. So I wrote to the Rolf Institute® and found out how to do it, and I did it, I became a Rolfer. I have been practicing Rolwing SI now for thirty years this year [2015].~~

**RA:** ~~I've known you long enough to have heard you talk many times about how Rolwing SI has served as a frame of reference for viewing life. Could you talk a little bit about that aspect? How, through the process of having received Rolwing sessions and becoming a Rolfer, has your outlook on life been informed or re-informed?~~

**TB:** ~~We start with structure because we can see it and put our hands on it, but it~~