

# The Ten Series: A Phylogenetic Approach

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Michael Boblett

**ABSTRACT** Author Michael Boblett draws on his background in anthropology to examine the Ten Series and the work of each session in terms of phylogeny and regaining aspects of our evolution that have become 'lost' to us.

*There was a time when you were not a slave, remember that. You walked alone, full of laughter, and you bathed bare-bellied. You say you have lost all recollection of it, remember. The wild roses flower in the woods. Your hand is torn on the bushes gathering the mulberries and strawberries you refresh yourself with . . . You know how to avoid a bear on the track. You know the winter fear when you hear the wolves gathering. But you can remain seated for hours in the treetops to await morning. You say there are no words to describe this time, you say it does not exist. But remember. Make an effort to remember. Or failing that, invent.*

Monique Wittig (2007, 117-118)

*I don't know a soul who's not been battered, I don't have a friend who feels at ease, I don't know a dream that's not been shattered, or driven to its knees. But it's all right, it's all right. For we lived so well so long. Still, when I see the road we're traveling on, I wonder what went wrong, yes, I wonder what went wrong.*

Paul Simon, "American Tune"

## Introduction

Rolfing® Structural Integration (SI) is political. It is sharply topical. It is inherently subversive. It evokes ancient freedoms. We take literal chains off people – chains embedded in flesh and soul. We show people what lies within them, their own tools for calling forth their own deepest strengths, hidden behind socially constructed personae. Rolfers are archeologists. We teach the skill of digging up forgotten patterns, remembering the steps of forgotten dances, echoing silenced voices back into song and speech.

Rolfing SI as archaeology uses the living body as the site for profound and sometimes painful digging. We are addressing the buried memories of individuals, but also the lost narratives of assimilated tribes, even of our entire species. This digging hurts at times, because the underlying traumas are so often terrible. We humans are constantly recovering from amnesia. What's lost includes a host of stolen opportunities, pieces of our bodies and souls traded away for survival in inhuman situations,

tools set aside and never picked up again. But what's found is joy.

Digging, we find treasure: strength, resilience, compassion, truth. In this sense, Rolfing SI is yet another form of resistance, a kind of 'guerilla medicine', a school of heretical and forbidden knowledge. What have we lost, we humans? What have some of us lost that others have not? How do we reclaim this heritage?

But let's start with this: What has all this to do with my basic subject? This article is about the Ten Series as a tool for exploring our human phylogeny. I shall draw on physical and cultural anthropology. I hope to find specific turning points in history and prehistory. The loss of self, the memory of violence, the scars of slavery – these things are inherent in us all, no matter how privileged our recent ancestry. Helen Keller (1903, 74) remarked, "There is no king who has not had a slave among his ancestors, and no slave who has not had a king among his."

But I shall also present patterns of movement that are older than humanity itself, as our non-human ancestors have reinvented themselves again and again, incorporating older patterns into new activities. Even here, however, I want to show specifically how the neurological memories of very ancient movements can make more newly invented movements more graceful in living, human bodies. What appear to be trade-offs in evolution (the loss of the tail comes to mind) are often subtle compromises.

For each hour (session) in the Ten Series, I can only address a single 'phylogenetic

forgetting' in human development. I shall do this fairly arbitrarily, knowing that I am leaving a lot out. One pattern per session cannot possibly provide a full understanding of any particular session's phylogenetic implications. (This list is evocative, not comprehensive. Extrapolate!)

But that's precisely why the Ten Series works so well for addressing phylogenetic amnesia. Every meeting with a client presents a host of awakening memories, personal and transpersonal, clamoring to be seen and felt. I often feel like a triage nurse at a train wreck: I can't do everything. The Series helps me in the painful job of prioritizing. For this bigger picture, a phylogenetic approach to the Ten Series is the perfect framework for discussing the loss – and recovery – of human possibilities.

Nor will my list of lost memories be at all chronological. I shall skip around in our family tree, leapfrogging across epochs like a monkey. But then, jumping and climbing is a lot of what makes us human! We never entirely came down from the trees, did we?

Also, I shall address some sessions at far greater length than others. This article will not be balanced in that way. Also, this article will be much less technical than any of my previous submissions to this Journal. Hence my rather mythopoetic language. Some of you will find this approach helpful. Others will not.

Finally, I am dimly aware that various SI colleagues have undertaken similar analyses over the years. Kevin Frank comes to mind. How many of my

observations will be new? None, I hope! I will welcome the news that a particular 'insight' is old stuff, explored more fully by somebody more qualified.

Let's start digging!

## First Hour – Sleeve and Core

I like coining words. Here's one: *pre-appendicular*. Looking at the axial complex, I am interested in how it once supported (and still supports) rapid movements below or above water – without limbs. Pre-appendicular movement is essential to smooth appendicular movement, which is not only secondary phylogenetically, but ought to be secondary in initiating movements. Graceful movements come from within, not from outside. (More on that later.) When this hierarchy of movement is reversed, we humans jerk around like marionettes. But ideally, the *Homo sapiens* spine reuses very old abilities in order to make our unusual bipedalism not only possible but agile and efficient. The transition from walking to running involved the increased separation and distancing of ribs from hips. This supported contralateral movement above and below through the complex recruitment of many smaller spinal movements that once moved limbless vertebrates through water.

I've said all this before, but in appendicular terms. Until now, my focus was always on feet and, by extension, legs and hip joints. In this article, I can now follow more freely the more ancient theme of axial movement, which again I will call 'pre-appendicular' movement.

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How do I get there? Well, the paradox of the First Hour is that in touching the 'sleeve' we already address pre-appendicular levels of evolution at the 'core'. The rib cage is the key to this. To soften and expand the rib cage, we manually touch the sleeve, but we are already sending off ancient questions to much deeper structures. This is because sessions one to three address the sleeve, but the core can't possibly sit idly by. Inevitably, the core reacts. And the quality of that reaction, whether it leads to chaos or integration, depends on the quality of my deeper touch, the touch beyond my fingers. Inevitably, this touch begins in the First Hour, whether I pay attention to the data or not. But what I may ignore cannot ignore me.

More accurately, when I lay my hands on people, I am aware of a large continuum between my direct movement of tissues and what Ed Maupin and others have called the 'questioning touch'. My physical fingers explore the surface, but the antennae of my fingers are already reaching deeper. The core is not ready for direct contact. But it wants to be consulted. This courtship must be slow, courteous, even ceremonious. Think of old-fashioned marriage negotiations through elderly intermediaries – with the core as the shy and careful virgin, and the sleeve acting the part of duenna or *entremetteuse*. (Cue the Spanish guitars in something by Bizet.) Why is this? Because sessions one to three are primarily – though not exclusively – about breathing. The First Hour's contribution to breathing requires the recollection that ribs are older than the ability to breathe air. This is truly pre-appendicular.

So, what *is* the movement-application of this? That we are walking fish. More to the point, we are walking worms. The acts of breathing, wriggling, swimming with fins, and eventually walking contralaterally with arms are all connected. So, when my fingers touch the client's sleeve, my antennae must already address both the posterior and the anterior spine through the breath.

In other words, free breathing is not the only goal of the First Hour. Rather, free breathing (along with other deep processes) will begin to support – and redirect – movements both closer to and further from the center. With a questioning touch, the entire chain of movement moves out from the axial line, so that older

and deeper movements come into right relationship with newer and shallower ones. Each system can then assume its proper order of initiation and completion.

But can we go back even further? Is there something in us even older than pre-appendicular movement? Can we address what I call a *pre-axial* level?

Ready or not, here it comes.

## Second Hour – The Breathing Foot

*All the world is just a narrow bridge,*

*Just a narrow bridge,*

*Just a narrow bridge,*

*All the world is just a narrow bridge,*

*Just a narrow bridge,*

*Just a narrow bridge.*

*And above all, and above all*

*Is not to fear, not to fear at all,*

*And above all, and above all*

*Is not to fear at all.*

*Ha-olam kulo gesher tsar me'od,*

*gesher tsar me'od,*

*gesher tsar me'od,*

*V'ha-ikar, v'ha ikar,*

*Lo l'phached, lo l'phached klal*

*V'ha-ikar, v'ha ikar,*

*Lo l'phached klal*

Chasidic chant, Reb Nachman  
of Breztlav

"Narrow Bridge" is a chant against fear. This Chasidic song came to me through oral tradition. I learned it from the poetess Elijah de Nur, who learned it from her husband Rabbi Yechiel de Nur, who learned it at the Yeshivat Cachmei Lublin in pre-Holocaust Poland. The rabbi himself survived Auschwitz.

Dancing with Chasidism has been a privilege for me. When we separate song too much from dancing, songs start to die. Maybe dancing begins to die when we separate dancing too much from song. In any case, to sing "Narrow Bridge" brings courage, but to sing it and dance it brings even more. What I'm trying to evoke in an experiential though vicarious way is how a 'dancey-singy' way of moving can

give a client deep confidence in everyday situations. We are all walking the knife's edge. We are all poised above the abyss of fear.

So here I am back at my old obsession, the foot. Like breathing, the foot is not the sole focus in any one of sessions one to three. But what happens if we connect feet and lungs phylogenetically, which is a way to connect them as systems? This brings me to my promise of a 'pre-axial' level of evolution addressed in the Second Hour. A dancing foot is a bouncy foot. It is a playful foot, a childlike foot, a juicy foot. It is a resonant foot. In other words, it is a breathing foot.

How do we get to this breathing foot? In keeping with my theme of recovering ancient patterns, we remind the feet that they are echoes of things far older than feet. This is how I get to address what I call pre-axial structures and movements.

For me, the solution to this problem lies in asking questions directly through the dome (or diaphragm) of the foot to the main diaphragm at the bottom of the rib cage, as earlier I listened through the ribs to the posterior and anterior spine. Here, the level of evolution is not just pre-vertebrate, but pre-bone. We are not descended from jellyfish, but we are certainly descended from squishy things that moved through water in much the same diaphragmatic way. Indeed, there is something quite visceral about a properly functioning foot. I've said this before in terms of feet. But now feet are secondary, which is where they belong.

The breath of the main diaphragm can literally resonate in the breathing foot, though usually not in a simple beat-for-beat synch. (By the way, the craniosacral rhythm is an even more primal example of domes resonating with each other. It's just not something I'll address in this article.) Literally, it is possible to teach all the diaphragms to imitate the plasticity and three-dimensionality of the main diaphragm. In the Second Hour, the diaphragm I address most directly is the living, breathing dome of the foot, but I must remain mindful of the whole echoing chain of diaphragms. (The roof of the mouth is just one example.) As with the spinal muscles in the First Hour, we do not touch this diaphragm directly in the Second Hour, but we are already asking it questions. Again, I contact the sleeve directly, but already

ask questions of the core. And like the spine, the diaphragm answers!

Ida Rolf once said that the common goal throughout *all* the sessions of the Ten Series was to horizontalize the pelvis. (I can't supply a citation for this, since it came to me through conversation.) But I prefer to say it a different way: in each session of the Series, I directly or indirectly address the main diaphragm. In *stasis* I want to see the pelvis become horizontal, but I prefer to see balanced *movement* in all three dimensions of diaphragmatic action.

In this way, the juicy echoing of our various diaphragms may be called *pre-axial* and *pre-osseous*. Though it certainly follows the center line of the body, the coronal and sagittal elements of this movement flow naturally from diaphragms resonating three-dimensionally like singing bowls.

Thus far I have gone back to pre-axial and even pre-axial levels of evolution. Now I want to get very modern. Not all buried patterns are lost in prehistory. For what I now address, read the headlines!

### Third Hour – Space in a Narrow World

*The danger lies in forgetting what we had. The flow between generations becomes a trickle, grandchildren taping-recording grandparents' memories on special occasions perhaps – no casual storytelling jogged by daily life, there being no shared daily life what with migrations, exiles, diasporas, rendings, the search for work. Or there is a shared daily life riddled with holes of silence.*

Adrienne Rich (2003, 7)

Why do so many of us keep using the 'Third-Hour position' to do things in other sessions? What brings us back to addressing things from the side, again and again? Well, coronal space is not a one-off issue. Side-to-side awareness comes up after the Third Hour. One reason is that modern humans (depending on culture) are so fiercely sagittal in our focus. This sagittal focus puts chains on contralateral movement between the upper and lower girdles.

What's gone wrong? What evolutionary forgetting is at stake here? What parts of ourselves have we traded for survival?

## We are deconstructing patterns deeply incised into the bodies and spirits of our clients. They are often finding pieces of themselves they once suppressed in order to fit in.

Among others, there is a narrow understanding or rather application of gender. Specifically, I refer to how we construct gender in our modern world. Was it always this way? Without subscribing to theories of a primal matriarchy, I will say, "No." But on the practical level, what can I do to allow clients a more flexible expression of their genders in gravity and in space? Read them a lecture on the history and prehistory of family systems? Gait work is easier and a lot more appropriate. Third-Hour gait work is especially revealing and especially helpful.

Men freeze their hips. Women freeze their shoulders. Truth or stereotype? Fair or unfair? Of course, both genders freeze both girdles. They freeze their patterns depending on personality, subculture, etc. But the imbalances of our society show starkly in this particular imbalance: that most women make themselves unnaturally narrow in social space, while most men seem reluctant to admit that our pelvises exist. Gait work can help address this. But a more comprehensive use of space – arising from a more comprehensive understanding of self – is also why my clients often experience interesting dreams – and interesting interpersonal changes. We are deconstructing patterns deeply incised into the bodies and spirits of our clients. They are often finding pieces of themselves they once suppressed in order to fit in.

Women who begin to take up space as they walk often report dramatic changes in their lives at home and at work. Men who allow their ilia and rib cages to move independently often have similar – though not identical – experiences. Taking that literal first step into a different use of space – this requires but also reinforces deep changes in our sense of who we are. The awkwardness is strong. Humor is important, so long as it does not become too welcome a distraction, an excuse to avoid the tough stuff.

Dancing a different dance is a function of rhythm, of muscle memory, of creating a new template in the neural network. But I submit that for the human body, very few possible dances (real or metaphorical) are entirely new. Memory is the heart of physical learning. I am speaking of *deep memory*, which transcends the biography of any specific person but is deeply personal. In this case, some memories need not be older than our humanity itself. But the archeology of digging them up is no less challenging.

Now we move into sessions four through seven. At this point, we may directly palpate core structures, but the groundwork was laid by three sessions of negotiations with the core.

### Fourth Hour – An Ape's Abs

Have you ever looked at an ape's abs? They're disappointing. This is true even on young and hairless animals. These disappointing abs are in sharp contrast to the other wonderful muscles I see on hairless chimps and gorillas (individual animals suffering from alopecia, which renders their skins hairless). In particular, the shoulders and arms of these creatures remind me of the equivalent muscles on acrobats, whose bodies are truly marvelous. The back muscles of apes are also well-formed. Especially striking are the sharply defined front edges of the lats. Again, I am reminded of acrobats – and of some swimmers. But human bipedalism – not just occasional shuffling but actual running – requires an entirely different use of abdominal muscles. And, the abdominal muscles must express not only themselves but muscles reaching posteriorly to and also including the front of the spine.

The 'amnesia' I choose to mention here is even newer than our social construction of gender: it is our culture's obsession with

fake muscles, muscles that don't actually do anything. One real-life manifestation of the posterior sources of abdominal strength – or its lack – is the contrast between what I call 'real abs' and 'fake abs'. Living in San Diego, I see a lot of pretty bodies. In our sunny city, the right torso is a better status symbol than a suit from Saville Row. But most of these expensive physiques are utterly weak. This is because San Diego is one of the nation's leading centers for the purely cosmetic shaping of physiques. You want an eight-pack resembling alligator skin? You can get this, but with exercises that will leave you barely able to look over your shoulder or scratch your butt. The results are the 'bread-and-butter' (if they ate carbs) of underwear models of both sexes – and I have worked with these people. But to my jaded eyes, it all looks as fake as any plastic surgery. Real abs may not have so many little lines and ridges, but they follow the contours of structures much further back in the body than the rectus abdominis and its neighbors. Real abs also move when people walk. Anyone who has worked with skaters or surfers will see the difference at once.

The core sessions, four, five, six, and seven, are, of course, not our first contact with the core. But now we are being more direct. In the Fourth Hour, the medial line of the legs calls forth the ability of the psoas and iliacus to change walking and other movement from the main diaphragm. We are not just opening the perineum; we are opening the road to the top of the ilium in front and the top of the thoracolumbar aponeurosis in back.

My point here is that only a few movement cues at the end of a Four Hour can start the client building awareness in preparation for the Fifth Hour, when we address these and other structures more directly. But the more directly visceral work of the Fifth Hour leads me much further back than the disconnect between cosmetic and functional muscles.

### **Fifth Hour – The Hierarchy of Movement**

Reversal of the proper hierarchy of movement is a deep disease in human movement. It is not confined to the West. Rather, different forms of co-opted movement appear in different 'civilized' populations. What they all share is a marionette-like pattern, in which movement is evoked from outside the body. The

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outermost parts of the body respond to an external and cortically driven pull or imperative. The hands and feet initiate movements that never quite reach the core.

But the core is precisely where movements ought to begin. In a healthy body, what is softer, more fluid, and less predictable will guide what is harder and more predictable. Reflecting the hierarchy of movements in the universe, the correct hierarchy of bodily movement corresponds precisely to the levels of viscosity in our tissues. Muscles guide bones. Viscera guide muscles.

And what are our viscera but tubes or channels for various kinds of liquid or semi-liquid stuff? In practice, but not ideally, our circulatory systems for blood, lymph, or other fluids often obey restrictions imposed by surrounding structures. Such restrictions only happen when liquids are prevented from expressing their true force in the body.

Add air to this mix and we have a body that is meant to obey a series of graceful and effortless oscillations of matter contained but not ruled. In my personal life, my goal is to get out the way of my own blood and breath. I hope to do the same for my clients. Further, the phylogenetic forgetting I want to address here is going to sound *really* strange: I firmly believe that the liquid and even gaseous levels of matter point to more than freedom of circulation, whether of blood or lymph or even air. We now have the opportunity to remember something from before we became multicellular creatures. We can glimpse a cellular awareness. And it's astonishing how much sheer joy can be experienced in a cellular level of

experience. I cannot readily put this into words, but I have succeeded – sometimes – in awakening this in others. Looking all the way forward to the Tenth Hour, I may describe this as the first inklings of the 'light body'.

### **Sixth Hour – A Universe in Itself**

Guess what? As I examined the Sixth Hour from a phylogenetic viewpoint, I found myself unable to choose a single incidence of evolutionary amnesia. Rather than keep struggling, I have decided to skip the Sixth Hour precisely because it is so important and therefore so complex. Who knows? My extensive maunderings of this subject might turn into an entire article on its own. Something like, "The Sixth Hour and the Whole %^&# Ancestral Tree."

### **Seventh Hour – Shattering the Mask**

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.

Oscar Wilde (2007, 96)

But even as we wake up the individual cells, there are a few other barriers to throw down. As Wilde understood, covering the social mask with something made of leather or wood or papier mâché is powerfully liberating. This is because masks are temporary. We can put them on and take them off. With masks, a whole diversity of personae can replace the face by which society defines us, and by which we define ourselves.

It is more difficult to release the neurological restrictions of the social mask itself. This is because we are unleashing an even larger library of possible masks, as the illusion of a monolithic self begins to dissolve into a host of other suppressed possibilities. My most successful clients often combine Rolfing SI with Jungian work, precisely so that previously unexpressed archetypes can literally show their faces.

What evolutionary forgetting lies at the root of the social mask? I might call it the enslavement or domestication of a more general primate impulse toward cooperation. While our primates cousins are far from perfect in their forms of social hierarchy, the expressive face of a chimp or bonobo seems to me more honest than most of the human faces I see. But social groups are much smaller among the other primates. Among humans, our social selves are usually trimmed down to serve as cogs in vast social machines. The trick of free expression is to communicate effectively but without surrendering to the idea that the social self must be consistent. This paradoxical larger self can be confusing, but the confusion is more honest and more powerful. That's better communication, which leads to more genuine cooperation.

In terms of hands-on work, addressing the nose and jaw are just two avenues toward softening the entire neuromuscular mask to address the head inside and out. Through various avenues, we can reach all the way down to the limbic system. We do not touch the latter, but it is at the root of our evolution as mammals as well as social mammals. As in sessions one to three, we once again reach toward what we cannot touch.

So here's Michael's Crazy Theory #1003: as the cranium and its surrounding structures experience more freedom and expansion, I firmly believe that this extra spaciousness transmits directly to deep structures we don't usually consider malleable. So, in the Seventh Hour, my ultimate goal is 'taking the girdle off the limbic system'. For one thing, this greater spaciousness allows the sense of smell to be more powerful, both in terms of detecting different smells, but also in connecting those smells to deep memories. In turn, the sense of self becomes even more expansive.

That's about it. My treatment here of the Seventh Hour is shorter than for the others. This is not because it is unimportant. Rather, it is because so much of the Seventh Hour is about things I can't really put into words.

### **Eighth Hour – Flip a Coin?**

Upper or lower girdle for the Eighth Hour? – If only we could flip a coin! But the truth is, I often know – or suspect – fairly early in a Ten Series whether the Eighth Hour will be an upper or lower session. Whether the initial or most profound dislocation of the body is in the upper or lower girdle, this imbalance is often apparent from the beginning of the Series.

Of course, clients surprise me. Nothing is certain until the beginning of Eight Hour. Also, the primary or more profound dislocation may actually be more amenable to release. This can happen for a variety of reasons. One cause might simply be greater attention on my part. A stubborn pattern calls forth my own stubbornness!

The choice at the Eighth Hour brings me back to what I addressed for the Third Hour – the deeply different roles played by the upper and lower girdles in our cultural and physical evolution (and our ancient amnesias) – only now my focus is no longer on gender. As I already admitted, gender is only one determining factor in upper versus lower girdle restriction. Women are not always more restricted in the upper girdle, nor men in the lower.

For this reason, I shall now pretend that I have a client who is male and is more restricted in the upper girdle. For reasons that will become clear, he's also a strong external in the internal/external body typology developed by Jan Sultan. So what other factors besides gender might contribute to this man's pattern? Here I will focus on gaze, especially as it relates back to breathing. My imaginary male client is a sedentary office worker with a severely anterior head coming from a first rib jammed up where it crosses the clavicle in front. I would have determined and addressed this when I first examined the client and began the Series with him by noting that I could not see the lower or upper borders of his clavicles, but for the purposes of this article, I shall pretend that first-rib and the clavicle are still stubbornly united at session eight.

The location of the client's pain would certainly not be the determining clue, as discomfort would most likely be posterior, at the C7-T1 juncture, radiating from a giant dowager's hump. But I would have started in front. I'd have begun by asking about the client's lungs: "Did either of your parents smoke when you were growing up, either tobacco or cannabis?"

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Did you ever smoke anything on a regular basis? Any history of asthma? Any history of chronic pneumonia or bronchitis? Any history of chronic sinus infections?" Befitting his first-rib restriction, the man I'm imagining had a childhood exposure to secondhand smoke and an adolescent fondness for cannabis. He also has a resulting tendency toward hoarding air, which expresses in a history of asthma.

I would also ask about the client's exercise routine. In keeping with his overall postural and psychological type, he is what I call a 'chronic bulker'. He lifts weights, but never more than eight to twelve reps per set. He's been doing this for decades. The concept of defining as well as bulking was never presented to him, or he rejected it. His idea of aerobic exercise is a few minutes on a stationary bicycle, though he usually skips this. Stretching is a foreign concept to him. He rarely spends time outdoors.

What has all this to do with gaze? What has gaze to do with this man's breathing? What have gaze and breath to do with his choices of exercise? What form of cultural amnesia do these things express? As I see it, the timing of this cultural forgetting is quite recent. It starts in late prehistory and even early history. It has to do with the transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture. It also has to do with the dramatic increase in class differences supported by agricultural societies.

My client's gaze is almost always down. He is no longer a hunter. He no longer scans the horizon for his next meal. He is no longer a gatherer. He maintains no

180° awareness of what surrounds him in the forest. Overall, he is less alert. He is more accustomed to routine. His world is safer. But the cost is his domestication – and human beings are really not designed for domestication. Sooner or later, the heavy yoke takes its toll. And his breathing? His concept of strength no longer includes the alternation of fast and slow movements, heavy lifting but also jumping, agility, and the kind of long-term stamina that requires more than eight to twelve repetitions. He can afford to ignore his lungs. He can encase them in a shell of showy muscle. He can afford to tuck his chin down. He can be strong, but only as a beast of burden.

The result is not the same as the cosmetic body of the 'gym rat' I mentioned above. My client's muscles are closer to functionality. He may even do tasks around the house. No, his problem is somewhat older. The disjuncture from the past is an unconscious acceptance of a subservient role, the self-identification as a solid and reliable tool of the State. My clients plods, probably because his parents plodded and their parents plodded. But the separation and mutual freeing of first ribs and clavicles can be the first step toward throwing off that yoke, lifting his submissive head, looking around, sniffing the air, and finding a possibly more dangerous but certainly more joyful way of living. But he may actually be safer in such a shift: he is less likely to die of a heart attack – or get mugged by somebody he doesn't see coming.

Even more exciting is how the Eighth and Ninth Hour sometimes interact.

How often do we see that a Ninth Hour delivers unexpected changes based in Eighth-Hour work? This can happen as the previously more restricted girdle lets loose things in the seemingly more responsive one. Let's take a second look at our recovering beast of burden.

### **Ninth Hour – Beyond the Goose-Step**

My imaginary male client was less stubbornly restricted in his lower girdle, but the release of the first rib helps complete some unfinished business with his hips. As my client looks up and around, reaches as well as pushes, and begins to inhabit a world where curiosity is no longer punished, he begins to walk less like a harnessed ox and more like a wild bull. His tail, once meekly tucked down, starts to lift aggressively. Watch out, he's pawing the ground!

What do I mean? Is this pawing of the ground just a metaphor? No, his stride is actually becoming more balanced, front and back. Previously, he just kicked his legs out in front when he moved forward. Even when he ran (which was rarely), he just goose-stepped very quickly. (And we wonder why the marathon is ruled by sub-Saharan Africans? Genetics or culture? Nature or nurture?)

In terms of upper and lower girdles, my client's back-stride was restricted by his C-curve posture, with anterior shoulders and posterior ilia attached to a slumped spine. He might work his glutes in the gym with the help of weights, but having little anterior range of motion to activate them, his glutes haven't atrophied but – worse – have developed in an artificial way having nothing to do with their true function. He may have a big butt, but his butt is as fake as his biceps. The physical forgetting is exactly the same as the one that fixed his head too far in front: generations of safe, steady, humble plodding have produced a strong but submissive body. But once he remembers how to run, jump, and dance from awakened hips, he is even more likely to throw off his inherited harness and make a dash for freedom. No fence can hold him back. No rider can cling to his back. No matador can confuse him. This ox has his testicles back! (For female clients, choose whatever metaphor you like to express freedom versus domesticity!)

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### **Tenth Hour – The Gift That Keeps on Giving**

Rolfing SI is not something we do to people. It is something people do to themselves. This is why it is education, not healing. The client does the healing.

Self-healing requires proprioception. The Tenth Hour, along with the physical integration and horizontalization of structures, is the culmination of a process of teaching clients to live in their bodies. More specifically, we don't just teach movement. We teach perception as it precedes and enlightens movement.

This is hardly groundbreaking. But once more, a phylogenetic referent may help in actually doing this. At this stage, I want to revisit the notion of a hierarchy of movement, which again is a hierarchy based on viscosity, but now the hierarchy takes an unexpected turn. Yes, liquid stuff still guides squishy stuff. Squishy stuff guides chewy stuff. Chewy stuff guides stiff stuff. But guiding everything is a set of patterns existing on the cusp between energy and matter. We may try to reduce this to electrical impulses, but I think it's better to think of these patterns as *prana*, *chi*, *ruach*, etc. What we are looking at is energetic awareness, what some writers have called the *light body*.

Even if I define the light body as just the brain and its various layers – or the brain and its network of peripheral nerves – the hierarchy of movement becomes slightly more complex, albeit in a simple way. In matter, the hierarchy goes only one direction between the different degrees of viscosity: soft things rule hard things. But awareness goes both ways. It is reciprocal. It is mutual. Between 'high' and 'low' levels of consciousness, even between 'subtle' and 'gross' levels of physicality, there is no question of the hierarchy being anything but an echo back and forth, neither side entirely controlling the process.

Here, the phylogenetic amnesia involves the evolution of the brain itself. There is

no single time when the different layers of the brain began to lose track of each other. I do not believe that our very young human consciousness is solely responsible for this disconnect. But as the human brain more fully integrates its different layers – ancient and modern – how does this work?

The brain-stem and the amygdala don't just take over. They don't just tell the neocortex what to do. This only happens when we go on automatic pilot. We may be very efficient in this blackout state, but it can never be how we live our lives. But neither should the neocortex issue unilateral commands down the line. We've all seen movements that were too 'cortically driven', too self-conscious. We've all seen this in gait work, with the client frantically trying to integrate a long and undigested list of movement imperatives instead of dancing gracefully in an integrated way. With reciprocal influence, the different layers of awareness resonate with each other, much as the domes or diaphragms of the body echo each other's full three-dimensionality.

Now we see a client with true autonomy. Gravity not only continues to heal, but gravity continues to be the teacher. The client's further evolution is epistemological as well as structural – if indeed these are different things. This is the true meaning of the Tenth Hour.

### **What Now?**

As I admitted in my Introduction, the sections of this article are not meant to be comprehensive. Again, no single phylogenetic forgetting can dominate any single session of the Ten Series. What I have given are just examples. As I said before – extrapolate!

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*over sixty years ago." In addition to writing about Rolfing SI, Michael has published a short book of poems and is working on a book about nutrition.*

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