

Asking the Right Question: What Is the Random Body?

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ABSTRACT *The author proposes that Rolfers need not ask what a person looks like after they've experienced a complete Rolwing® Structural Integration (SI) Ten Series; SI practitioners should instead ask: What is a 'random body'? Mintz shares his impressions about why people suffer random bodies, plus the factors to his success in helping people integrate and organize through his Rolwing work.*

Editors' note: This article is first a discussion by the author followed by an excerpt from Ritchie Mintz's (2018) From Adam and Eve to Ida Rolf – What Is the Random Body? The text has been slightly modified to align with the style guide of Structure, Function, Integration.

It is part of Dr. Ida Rolf Institute's® (DIRI) history that we wait and hope for an event that will make the world notice us. The Rolwing® Structural Integration (SI) work experienced by pianist Leon Fleisher (Kozinn 2020), Olympic skater Brian Orser (O'Hara 1988), and others certainly created some buzz about us in the world. But as Rolfers and DIRI as our

school, we are still waiting for that big worldwide conversation that will 'put us on the map'. Another part of our history is that our attempts to educate the world about our presence and our work, which have centered on the question, what is the Rolwing SI 'integrated body'? The answer to that question is to describe our valuable product to the world so people might know what to expect when seeking our service. But maybe that approach is backward and asks the wrong question. Maybe the right question for the world to chew on is, What is the 'random body'? After all, we live on a planet full of random bodies where nobody knows they are a

random body. Don't you think they would like to find out?

What does it mean to be born to a lifetime on Earth? Literature speaks of the 'human condition' as being some kind of punishment, a fall from *grace* that is suffused with physical pain. But Ida P. Rolf, PhD, demonstrated that life in a body does not have to come with penalty of pain. Imagine a far-away planet where every person was afflicted with the same painful malady, but no one knew what it was or why they hurt. Picture this malady as every person's experience since the beginning of people, and that everyone who was ever born and lived and died on that planet was afflicted: nobody was exempt. Also imagine that this malady and its cure was right there in front of everyone's eyes but nobody could see it. Now, imagine that one person in all of the planet's history saw both the malady and its cure. Wouldn't the citizens of that planet like to know about that?

Well, that planet is Earth and the observant person is our own Dr. Rolf. In the twentieth century she noticed the 'malady', identified its characteristics, and developed a cure. She named the affliction, called it the random body. Maybe the question we should be asking is: What is the human condition known as the random body? Imagine a newspaper or a newsfeed where the banner headline reads

BREAKING NEWS: EARTH ALL RANDOM BODIES

Old Lady from Bronx Discovers Cure

Now, *that* would put us on the map. So, in the interest of creating just such a headline, I wrote my latest book (Mintz 2018): *From Adam and Eve to Ida Rolf – What Is the Random Body?* I experienced my first Rolfing Ten Series deep back in the twentieth century and have been a member of DIRI since 1978. In all that time, I have never heard any detailed conversation of what the random body is. There are a lot of books that attempt to describe the body after Rolfing sessions and the full Ten Series, including books by Rolf and my own, *Foundations of Structural Integration* (Mintz 2012). But in all that time, I'd never seen one that attempted a detailed description of the random body. That was the purpose of my 2018 book and that is the purpose of this article.

This is an important conversation, both for SI practitioners and the rest of the world. After all, we are offering the public a process and we try to say what we will deliver. The post-Ten Series *integrated* body we deliver is the end of the process – but we never quite state the beginning. Technology has given us updates and upgrades to every aspect of twenty-first century life; SI brings those updates and upgrades to the human body. The random body, as we have known it, is Human 1.0. It is the only model available since Adam and Eve (Of course, in human evolution we have seen various developments, from *Australopithecus* through to modern *Homo sapiens*. I am speaking here of our modern human form, which evolutionarily is classified as *Homo sapiens* and mythopoetically is from extant since Adam and Eve). The integrated and balanced body envisioned by Rolf is Human 2.0. Maybe that should be our headline.

From Adam and Eve to Ida Rolf – What Is the Random Body? is ninety pages where I present nineteen chapters and a compilation of thirty-three characteristics that define the random body. Some of these definitions are whole chapters of the book and some are perhaps a few words mentioned within a chapter. Some have yet to be explored at all. Is this the final and definitive list? Certainly not. There will be more in the future that will be added. But I tried to cover all the taxonomies (for Rolfing SI, a taxonomy is a system of classification to develop session strategies; Maitland 1991). The random-bodied citizens of planet Earth need to know that they are all random bodies and that a better way is possible, accessible, and necessary. The book was intended to be the first glance, a kind of survey course 101 that asks: What is the human condition known as random body? I invite a robust conversation within the SI community that swells to the whole rest of the world.

Converting one body from random to integrated in the gravitational field post-Rolfing series is way easier than alerting a whole planet about the difference. I offer this article and my book as tools to educate a fascially uneducated world. I pray this is not the final word on the subject. In furtherance of that prayer, I hereby offer to you, the reader of our DIRI journal, the introduction to my book: *From Adam and Eve to Ida Rolf – What is the Random Body?* Maybe asking

a different question will start a new worldwide conversation about Rolfing SI that puts us on the map.

Book Excerpt: Introduction

As we have already alluded to, Rolf had a special name for bodies that had not been processed in the ten-session series of her work. She called them random bodies. The concept describes the condition of every person that ever lived and died on the planet Earth, from the first hominids to the twentieth century lifetime of Rolf. If you want to get biblical, the history of the random body would read from Adam and Eve to Ida Rolf.

The integrated and balanced human body envisioned by Rolf is a pretty new phenomenon. She was born in 1896 and pioneered her work from the 1950s forward. This means that at present, people who have had and are integrated from their Ten Series have only been around about seventy years. That is a tiny speck of time compared with the thousands of generations that have lived and died on the earth since humans climbed down from the trees. Rolf was audacious. She had to be because it takes audacity to think that one might be able to rearrange a human body and get it to function better than the Great Lord God Almighty could do with the Crown of His Creation. To that extent, every practitioner of SI shares in that boldness. So, in the spirit of that audacity, I will let you in on a long-running conversation that I have had with the Almighty since that day long years ago when I figured out what Rolfing SI is and what it had done for me.

Here is my side of the conversation:

"God, you made a mistake. And not just a little *oops*. This one's a doozy. And the flaw is in the crown of your creation, no less. I'm referring, of course, to the human body, which you created in your own image. Really? You have back trouble? Down here on Earth, we humans sure do. We've got a whopping boatload of back troubles and lots of other fractuosities to endure because of your faulty design. Are you sure you don't want to walk back that 'created in your image' part?"

And every time I have asked the Almighty that question, I always get the same answer. The Great Spirit plainly and clearly tells me (italics added for supernal effect):

Here is the crux of the issue: in the random body, everything has gone wrong. That is, in the random body, there is no *one thing* that has gone wrong.

“There was no mistake. I included the Rolf in the design.”

This divine conversation reveals why the random-bodied citizens of planet Earth need to know that they are all random bodies and that a better way is possible and necessary. You could call it an impending evolution revolution for a planet that doesn't know it needs it.

There are many schools of the body. The Western/American medical system is mostly concerned with the treatment of diseases and focuses mostly upon changing the body chemistry. This is accomplished by introducing drugs into the body that fight the disease and correct body chemistry back to parameters that define the body as normal. The key to success in these endeavors is to properly diagnose what has 'gone wrong'. Then the proper remedy is introduced to correct what has 'gone wrong'.

But some body aberrations are biomechanical, not biochemical. There is a whole world of structural problems that, in our modern medical system, falls into the category of orthopedics. These problems surely include accidents and injuries. Getting into a vehicle collision or falling off a ladder is not a natural process. When people get wrecked and need surgery, casts, and stitches, it is usually painfully obvious what has 'gone wrong'. Then, just like curing a disease, the proper remedy is introduced and the problem is 'solved'. The common link in all this is the need to determine what has gone wrong. Then the proper remedy is applied and the problem is solved.

This is what makes it so hard to wrap the mind around the question: What is a random body?

Here is the crux of the issue: in the random body, *everything* has gone wrong. That is, in the random body, there is no *one thing* that has gone wrong. It is *all* wrong. To be clear what I mean, let me say more. The body has certain directions. The directions are the relationships of left-to-right, front-to-back, top-to-bottom, and inside-to-outside. Then there are the body levels. The levels are the relationships of local, regional, global, and universal. When I

say that everything in the random body is wrong, I am talking about a body where every fiber of tissue in the entire body is wrongly placed left-to-right, front-to-back, top-to-bottom, inside-to-outside, locally, regionally, globally, universally, from the top of the head to the soles of the feet.

What makes the entire concept hard to fathom is that, from Adam and Eve until Ida Rolf started her work, there had been no integrated body – no body that had gone through the integration of a Rolfing Ten Series – with which to compare. So, the entire condition of the random body has been taken for normal. Nothing about the random body is really normal. The random condition is just so ubiquitous as to be taken for normal because random bodies are all most people had ever seen for all of their lives and back to Adam and Eve. Rolf demonstrated that another way is possible. And she didn't do it by finding any 'one thing' that had gone wrong with any of the bodies that graced her Rolfing table.

There is another factor that makes the concept of the random body even harder for society to grasp. It turns out that when the *everything* that is wrong with the random body persist long enough, one local body part or region will complain. When that happens, medical science has names and diagnoses for those local complaints: back spasms, spinal disk pathologies, sciatic nerve flare ups, numb and tingling extremities, neck pains, headaches, flat feet, blown-out knees, shin splints, crooked ankles, tennis elbow, carpal tunnel, and on and on. What is not recognized is that these disparate diagnoses are all pulled together by one common theme: Each diagnosis is an exaggeration of the random pattern. That is, as the random pattern lingers and persists, the most pressure will find the weakest link in the body's support system and express itself there as pathology. That is the place that has been so stressed for so long that it cannot adapt any more. So, it fails. That is when a doctor can point to an x-ray and say, "Here's your problem. This is what went wrong. But don't worry, we can operate and fix it."

What is also not recognized is that, at this point, fixing the local problem is woefully

inadequate because the errant forces that are everywhere in the body are still present and active. Even with the offending part surgically fixed, the random body's collapse in gravity progresses and everything is still all wrong. And now, the body's pressures are looking for the next most-weakest place to express themselves. Before long, that place will also complain and fail and there will be another diagnosis and another intervention to fix it. And the beat goes on.

That is the condition of most of the people that come to my Rolfing table. They are collapsed in gravity to the limit of their body's ability to endure. Many have already been diagnosed and 'fixed' several times before we meet. They don't know why they have hurt so much for so long and they are looking to avoid yet another surgery. I have noticed that pain is a great equalizer. Anybody will do anything to get out of pain, even something non-medical like SI. By the time they come to me, most clients have already tried everything.

As I look back upon four decades of practice, with thousands of people, I recognize a very high success rate. I have fixed a lot of local problems that people bring to my table. I want to emphasize that I am not unique or alone. Any practitioner who is an heir to Rolf can do the same and more. How did I do that? How is it that I can do so much with so little? After all, my only tools are my hands and a homemade plywood table. How am I able to relieve so much pain without making a cut or administering a drug? And, most amazing of all, I am frequently able to do all this and much more in only ten hours. How can this be? How can one person working quietly alone accomplish so much compared to the vastness of the American/Western medical industrial complex? And . . . I might add . . . at a tiny fraction of the cost. How?

The answer is that I have tools beyond hands and table. My first and most important tool is my '*seeing eye*'. The seeing eye is the eye that not only looks, but also really sees what is there. The seeing eye not only observes but also can recognize the significance of what it is looking at. That is the key to this first tool:

perhaps everyone sees the same thing that I see, but everyone else considers aberrated human physical structure to be *normal*, even though it is not normal. That is how a society can look at a body that has collapsed in gravity and call the process normal.

“Everybody gets old. You can’t stop that.”

I hear that a lot. That sentiment is the very center of the conversation about the random body and that is what, as a society, we must change. As a society, we judge health and wellness by certain biochemical parameters. When our fluids and organs test within normal limits, we are considered healthy and well. The body’s structural problems with gravity do not enter that equation. That is why our society does not consider the effects of gravity over time to be a part of aging. It is a culture-wide looking and not seeing. But the seeing eye can see where gravity flows through a body and where it does not.

That leads to the next level of seeing: The places where gravity easily flows through can lift, whereas the places where gravity does not flow through will collapse. The next level of seeing after that is recognizing that the most collapsed places coincide with the areas of the most chronic structural pain. When we, as a planet, can see that relationship, that will be the first moment the world will begin to wrap its mind around the concept of the random body.

My next most valuable tool, after the seeing eye, is what I am able to feel. In my book *Foundations of Structural Integration* (Mintz 2012), I spend a good bit of time presenting theories about how bodies get into their structural troubles with gravity and how they then get fixated into those random patterns. Those theories are based upon my decades of experience as a Rolfer. The gift of all this experience is that I am able to feel the blocks and restrictions in a body as they let go. And magically, as the knots untie and the true layers of the body are revealed, my hands report back to my brain an eidetic image of everything that is in there.

I am able to feel the body unwind from its twisted tightness and shortness. In a series of glorious magic moments, I feel the body let go of its randomness and find its order. It is in the rapture of these magnificent transformational moments that I am able to feel what it means to be a random body. In those moments, I feel all the factors of randomness. And in those magic moments, I feel the body seeking and finding its nature as an integrated system. This is where the random body comes apart and the integrated body comes together. It is in these transitional and transformational moments where I discover what it means for the entire human race to be made up of random bodies. My goal is to share that discovery with the world. We live on a planet full of random bodies where nobody knows they are a random body. I wrote my books to tell them.

There is another tool that contributes to my success in relieving the aches and pains that drive people to my Rolwing table. This tool demonstrates the irony and the humor that Rolf’s work brings to the conversation. The irony is that the recipe for my success is backwards from the prevailing paradigms of understanding human body structure. The humor is in how wrong our fascially illiterate society has gotten exactly what the human body is. So, what is this funny and mysterious tool that works by working backward?

The truth is: I don’t fix people’s pains by fixing the pains. If this is starting to sound too Zen for rational thought, it is. That is why it is so hard to write a book about the random body for a planet that has no consciousness about fascia. On this planet, at this time, all the talk is about bones, muscles, and nerves. As long as the paradigm is thinking about bones, muscles, and nerves, nothing about SI makes any sense at all. But as soon as the paradigm shifts to include fascia and its magical quality of plasticity, a whole new world of possibility emerges. The purpose of writing this article and my books is to assist planet Earth in making that transition.

But getting back to my tricky little Zen tool, how do I fix pain by not fixing what is ‘wrong’? The answer lies in the difference between *this* body and *every* body. Remember that, in random bodies, there is no one thing that is wrong. In the Rolfer’s image of the random body, *everything* is wrong. So, as a Rolfer, I am way more interested in fixing the *everything* that goes wrong with *every* body than I am in what has gone wrong with *this* body that is on the table before me right now.

Here is what I tell the many people I mentioned before who come for relief: “I don’t know why you hurt and I don’t know how to fix it if I knew.”

Then, just as their face begins to drop to the floor, I say, “But I do see a thousand other things that have gone wrong that we *can* fix. What do you say we fix the thousand things that we *can* fix and see what happens to your pain?”

If they are willing to try SI on that basis, I am eager to have them. But I never claim to know what’s wrong nor do I predict in advance that it will get fixed. That way, I can live by an old policy I learned raising children: I never make a promise until after I know that I have already kept it.

That is more Zen than ever! What does that mean? Does that really mean I have no idea why people hurt? No, not at all. After decades of transforming bodies from random to integrated, my seeing eye tells me pretty quickly why a body before me hurts. But I do not claim to diagnose a medical condition nor any single cause. My eye sees the painful body part as the end of the line where the pressures of the body’s collapse in gravity meet the weakest links in the structural matrix. I work to take the strain off of those spots and redistribute the loads to the whole fascial net. When the body gives up its collapse and lifts instead, the load comes off the complaining sites and things can begin to heal. It is only after the client reports feeling better that I am free to say that I knew all along what was wrong and what to do.

The seeing eye is the eye that not only looks, but also really sees what is there. The seeing eye not only observes but also can recognize the significance of what it is looking at.

It is in the rapture of these magnificent transformational moments that I am able to feel what it means to be a random body . . . I am able to feel the body unwind from its twisted tightness and shortness. In a series of glorious magic moments, I feel the body let go of its randomness and find its order.

People come to SI with a myriad of pains and symptoms. Each malady carries its own medical diagnosis and a way to name the problem in Latin. Here is what goes unrecognized and unappreciated on our three-dimensional planet Earth: these disparate diagnoses are how the much larger and more chronic process of the body's collapse in gravity shows up as acute pain in localized places.

So, here is the backward Zen to my method: I give the pains and the symptoms only a sideways glance and I then proceed to transform the body from random to integrated by Rolting work. I perform all the tasks described in my aforementioned books that fix the thousand things that go wrong in the random body. I put these sore and aching bodies together in a way that is off of society's radar screen. The problem of writing a book about putting bodies together is that we live in a world that doesn't even know that it has fallen apart. I feel like a barker at the sideshow who hollers,

“Step right up, folks. I'm here to sell you something you never heard of because you don't know you need it.”

My job here is to educate the public about human physical structure. The first step of this job is to describe the starting point. That starting point is to describe and identify what a random body is. I have been involved with Rolting SI since 1972 and I have never heard this conversation. There are a lot of books that attempt to describe what unique qualities a body has after a Rolting Ten Series (including my own: *Foundations of Structural Integration*) but I have never seen one that tries to describe what a random body is (Mintz 2012). That is the purpose of this article and my books.

Richie Mintz graduated with a BA in 1969 and moved to Boulder, Colorado in 1971 to play music and write his first instructional book Bluegrass Bass. But Boulder held other riches – it was the

epicenter of the SI world. While living in Boulder, Ritchie got his Ten Series and it changed his whole life. At the time, Ritchie taught lessons and repaired instruments at the local music store. One day a man dropped by the shop with a mountain dulcimer that needed repair. His name was Peter Melchior, and he was Rolf's first appointed SI instructor. That chance meeting led Ritchie to a lifelong study of the human body, its mysteries, and its magic. Ritchie trained to be a Rolfer in 1978 and did his Advanced Training in 1981. He has served twice on the DIRI Board of Directors. His books are available at his website, www.ritchiemintz.com. Ritchie now makes his home and practice in Austin, Texas.

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