

the Rolfer who solicited her skills with his draft. Rolfer Vickie Kovar emailed Michael Vilain who provided the image for Figure 1 stating that she drew the figures for Rolfer Greg Knight's graduating class in 1993-1994.

When I contacted Vickie, she said:

I was a student at [the Rolf Institute] in 1994 when Greg Knight (class before my class) asked me to redraw the stick figures (from a rough penciled draft) for his class's t-shirts. I do not know where Greg got the configuration.

All that remained was to contact Greg, who wrote that he doesn't remember all of the details, but he clearly recalls the excitement of how "each figure had a reason, a simple teaching embedded in it." Here's his story:

It was my Combined Studies class of 1994 that produced the t-shirts with the ten symbols. The back of the shirt had a quote of Dr. Rolf's, "Evolution is not a closed road but a consistent slow open-ended path." We were reaching the end of our training and we wanted to do something to commemorate our experience. As any Roling practitioner likely remembers, there are a lot of details to learn when going through the training. Without this recent article, I would not have known or remembered the derivation of the symbols for sessions seven to ten. We must have seen them or been shown them in our class. As I recall it, I had the idea of creating images for the different back work for the other sessions of the Ten Series. With some help from fellow classmates, we came up with the stick figures. Each image told a story of the back work for each session as we were taught [it]. It's true that the images are not completely consistent – with the first six being more about the actual back work and the last four about something that is evoked in the session. Still, there seemed to be some logic to it all. As one progresses through the series and reaches the last four sessions, the back work is not as proscriptively defined. Mostly designing the images was for fun, with a little bit of teaching folded into it all.

Mystery solved!

# Self, Other: New Considerations in Rolf Movement® Integration

*An Interview with Monica Caspari*

**By Monica Caspari, Roling® and Rolf Movement® Instructor and Kevin McCarthy, Certified Rolfer™, Rolf Movement Practitioner**

**Kevin McCarthy:** I'm curious, having traveled extensively to teach and work in the U.S., Europe, and abroad, what draws you back to Brazil and what do you think the strengths of the Brazilian Roling Structural Integration (SI) community are?

**Monica Caspari:** Roling [SI] in Brazil promotes or is very much interested in movement and that's where my interest goes.

**KM:** What part do you feel you've played in shaping that movement focus?

**MC:** Actually, Vivian Jaye and Jane Harrington together with Pedro Prado were the ones who started shaping Rolf Movement in Brazil and I was just an assistant to Pedro. So I participated, you know, as just a little somebody who was following. And then later I started studying with Hubert [Godard] and started thinking about other issues of Rolf Movement, and then I made my contribution. But before that, really, the heroes of Rolf Movement in Brazil are Vivian Jaye, Jane Harrington, Pedro Prado, and also Gael Ohlgren [now Rosewood] and Heather Starsong.

**KM:** So you have, as part of the Rolf Movement faculty, helped to teach and adapt much of the work of Hubert Godard. Most recently you've attended an Advanced Movement Study Group in Germany where Hubert has been presenting his latest developments in movement theory. What are these developments?

**MC:** He's been talking about haptic touch and phoric activity and how important it is that you don't go for repetition of movement but that you find your core – it's all about orientation, perception, and coordination, ultimately.

**KM:** Do you see this as a step forward in the direction that Rolf Movement has been going or is it something new?

**MC:** When I first started studying Rolf Movement, it was more about the person, more interoception, proprioception, and not so much the 'other' and things. We used to

have the 'circle of being,' and in the circle of being there were four aspects – the physical, the mental, the spiritual, and the emotional. So it separated mental, spiritual, emotional, but to a certain extent they belong to the same category. But there was not a social aspect. That was missing.

**KM:** So this relational aspect seems like it's the big addition?

**MC:** It's a big and very important addition.

**KM:** And how do you think this is going to be changing the way we think about Roling SI in the future?

**MC:** I think it will make us consider the other. You know it's not enough that your body is aligned; how does this alignment express itself when you're in relation to the other? When you're talking to the other, working with the other, dancing, helping, doing dishes – there is the other and you cannot just pretend there is no other. So what does your 'Line' look like when it's talking to the other?

**KM:** So you are a teacher, you're providing Roling SI, you're a student with Hubert, and now you're teaching Hubert's work and your own interpretation. How do all these things combine into how you see Roling SI as an entity, as a discrete entity?

**MC:** I never thought about that Kevin, and that's very interesting because the kind of questions that you ask are clearly coming from a different culture than mine . . . I don't mean that it's bad, it's just, "What? I never thought about this!" It's more like I do what I do without having this analytical thinking. So that's very interesting. I don't know, I'll have to think about it.

**KM:** Do you think that cultural difference is one of the issues around acceptance of Rolf Movement?

**MC:** I do. I really, really do.

**KM:** Can you say a little bit more about that?

**MC:** Because by its very nature, Rolf Movement is . . . here [let me explain] like I teach in class: Why do you want to 'Rolf' people? For them to look better? And, so what? Or for them to enjoy more life? To take more advantage of their human form and human possibilities? And be more in contact, be more alive? Because bodies [that haven't had Roling work] – the way I see it, the way I feel it – they're less alive. So we make people more alive, we increase possibilities. I don't believe we are correcting mistakes. At least I'm not going for correction of mistakes. I'm going for increasing possibilities or creating new possibilities or alleviating suffering. I'm not as concerned if the person is perfectly aligned. So that's where I come from. And I believe my colleagues, at least most of my colleagues in Brazil, feel the same. They're going for quality of being in the human body. Making, having, feeling, or savoring the deliciousness of being in a body.

**KM:** So what does Rolf Movement do to bring that about that structural Roling work is unable to offer people?

**MC:** So you think that there are restrictions that can be in the tissues, and restrictions that are not in the tissue but in the behavior, in the structures of meaning that the person has. And the tissues can be free and yet the person doesn't move. We know that when you work structurally, you work and you work and you work and then you have the person standing up and walking and still the thing you wanted to see doesn't happen. Why? Because there's stuff that is stuck in the way people perceive, the way they use their bodies. So when we learn that, we create enormous opportunity, we increase the power of Roling SI; it's not decreased, quite the contrary. I don't mean to say that structural Roling work is not important or is more or less; no, both approaches, structural and movement, are very important. But I believe people don't fully grasp the importance of movement or the importance of finding direction in space, orientation – they don't grasp it yet, for the most part.

**KM:** Hubert, you've mentioned, came into a training you were in recently and said that he had made a mistake. I'm curious, what was this mistake and how does it relate to his concepts of haptic and phoric activity?

**MC:** Hubert teaches that we come from a structural culture, and because of this we find it easy to focus on the issue of shape.

From there it's not a far stretch to begin asking questions about somatic idealism. But the issue is not how to put tissue back into its place. What matters is not shape, but movement. Hubert insists that we have to go back to movement. What counts is the movement, not the place. And if we are not putting the body back where it should be, then neither should we teach the form of the movement that we should do. If I show you how you should move, you do not experience the setting of the situation that will allow the movement to show up. One should not command activation of the core, in doing so you only introduce a new holding! What the client needs is to develop the internal experience that produces the movement – the haptic activity – which will then evoke core stabilization. In the end, Hubert is saying that all we can do is to evoke the emotion that comes when encountering the world, which will affect all other emotional aspects of the person.

This piece I feel we have to nourish in students. This piece is the existential aspect, which to my perception is different than the psychobiological. For me when you're talking about psychobiological, you're talking about something that is kind of scientific, which does not translate for me the experience of what it is to be a human being. You know all your inner suffering? Each one of us knows what it means to be in a human body. We have these different emotions, different feelings, things that we are unable to communicate to the other; and if we are able, then the other is unable to understand, to fully grasp what we mean. And secondly, I know that you have something that is deep, profound, where other humans cannot meet you, am I correct? That's what makes us very alone, ultimately we are very, very alone. And then I go to a Rolfer for him to correct my posture and make me move better? For what? I want somebody to meet me and be with me, and even if that person cannot understand me at least [he] knows that I have that same lonely, suffering human spot like you, like me. You know what I mean?

**KM:** I do.

**MC:** So even if my lumbar is sidebent left or right, most importantly I want somebody there with me. Then the lumbar can be taken care of, you know?

**KM:** Why do you think Roling SI has come to this point?

**MC:** To what point?

**KM:** To this point where you're able to address – or are at least asking – the question of 'that,' that existential aloneness. Why and how is that being brought up through this process we understand as Roling SI?

**MC:** I guess because after we get so attracted and mesmerized or enchanted by biomechanics and visceral work and craniosacral and all of that, then the human aspect in us comes up. So eventually you have to deal with that, because if I go to a Rolfer, later – weeks or months later – what I will remember is not if the Rolfer was very clever in undoing the twists in my spine, but if he treated me well and if he received me, if he understood me and did not preach to me, because I don't want him to preach to me. I want to be accepted the way I am.

**KM:** I love the sound of that, but I'm curious how you can teach that to new Rolfers?

**MC:** Difficult. Difficult because we can think about it, we can try to invent exercises about it, I can try to make people get in touch with their felt sense when we're talking about this, but for me to upgrade a Rolfer is not so much about adding a ton of techniques (even though I'm teaching a ton of techniques), but [about] how to upgrade the humanness in the Rolfer – and I can do that only to the extent to which I try to develop that in myself, because I cannot take someone someplace where I have not been myself.

**KM:** I feel that down here [in Brazil] with you we're far away from the rest of the world. There's a certain current of movement and understanding here that is touching parts of Roling theory and practice in the States and I'm sure in Europe too. What is this movement saying and what do you want these people far away to hear?

**MC:** I would say first of all be open, open space inside yourself – it is what Hubert calls phoric activity. If you're full of yourself, you don't have room for the other, there is no way you can receive the other in a way that the other will open himself to cooperate with you. So it's a matter of opening space inside yourself. And no need to be afraid of anything, just go jump into the experience and enjoy it. After all, being alive is having experiences and you take nothing out of this life other than experiences.

Monica Caspari trained as a Rolfer in 1989, completing the Rolf Movement training in 1992 and advanced Rolffing training in 1993. She joined the Rolf Institute® faculty in 1994. She has taught in Brazil, the United States, Germany, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, and Japan. Monica holds a BA in Nutrition from Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil, a specialist degree from Uniãtalo, São Paulo, worked as a doula (midwife) for nineteen years; taught Hatha Yoga, and has studied Therese Bertherat's Antigyminastics, Gerda Alexander's Eutomy, Kum Nye, Emily Conrad's Continuum, Godelieve Denis Struyf's G.D.S. Muscular Chains, Stanley Keleman's Formative Process, and Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing®.

Kevin McCarthy holds a BA in English from Macalester College and worked as an EMT prior to obtaining his Rolffing certification in Boulder in 2007. While pursuing his practice in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Kevin became increasingly interested in the effects of emotion and metaphor as they relate to structural integration. His interest in these aspects of the work led to him pursuing his Rolf Movement training with Monica Caspari in Brazil in 2014, where this interview took place. He maintains a blog on Rolffing SI and all things related at [www.informrolffing.com](http://www.informrolffing.com).

## Reviews

### Notes from the Fascial Revolution

*The MELT Method* by Sue Hitzmann (HarperOne 2013)

*Fascia: The Tensional Network of the Human Body* edited by Robert Schleip, Thomas Findley, Leon Chaitow, and Peter Huijing (Chuchill Livingstone 2012)

*Why Fascia Matters* by Brooke Thomas (ebook)

#### Reviews by Szaja Gottlieb, Certified Advanced Rolfer™

Revolution denotes dramatic change. Here are two books, *The MELT Method* and *Fascia: The Tensional Network of the Human Body*, that reflect the seismic shift occurring among researchers, clinicians, practitioners, patients, clients, and the general public in understanding fascia and therapies using it. They can be considered in a sense the low brow and high brow of this revolution and are both relevant to practitioners of Rolffing® Structural Integration (SI) for differing reasons.

A *New York Times* bestseller, *The Melt Method: A Breakthrough Self-Treatment System to Eliminate Chronic Pain, Erase the Signs of Aging, and Feel Fantastic in Just 10 Minutes a Day!* is written by Sue Hitzmann, an exercise guru and somatic practitioner who is spearheading a new self-care fitness system whose principal tools are foam rollers and small rubbery balls, as well as selling related items, training MELT Method® instructors, and holding workshops in the U.S. and most certainly eventually all over the world. No matter one's opinion of the system, it is the first (to my knowledge) in popular culture explicitly based on the health of fascial tissue and one of the first in the new field of 'fascial fitness.' The first part of the book is specifically related to the latest discoveries concerning fascia, in particular the significant role that water plays in the fascial tissue universe and how dehydration of fascial tissue results in pain and how rehydration of fascia relieves it.

The imprint of SI permeates MELT—from the introduction by former practitioner Gil Hedley (who created Somanautics dissection workshops) to the acknowledgment at the end of the book of the "pioneering Rolfers turned researchers," including Tom Myers,

Robert Schleip, and Tom Findley. In between Hitzmann introduces the MELT system, an acronym for myofascial energetic length technique. Essentially, MELT is a self-maintenance system whose innovation is its introduction of a technique using foam rollers and rubber balls to decompress and rehydrate fascia. The premise of the book is simply that fascia, neglected until now, is a primary source for health and potential ill health. Sound familiar? Should be, since most of MELT's ideas concerning the fascial universe are echoes of SI. Certainly, ideas such as "domes and arches" and "two-directional lengthening," both claimed by Hitzmann as her own, will elicit a smile from SI practitioners reading her book.

Of greater concern is a certain diffuseness and repetition in the 300-page book, making it hard to follow. Written in a first-person subjective style, the personal history, ideas, and techniques seem to pile on one another. These problems will probably be solved when the DVD, currently in process, is released, thus removing all the unnecessary verbiage. Astonishingly, despite the derivative nature of MELT from SI, the key idea of lines of transmission of force through fascial planes, as presented, for example, by Tom Myers in *Anatomy Trains*, is lacking in terms of application. From an SI point of view, as expressed by Myers, the user could apply the foam roller along geometric lines of transmission—the lateral line, back line, superficial front line, etc. A client, for example, could work his lateral line, which would include peroneal compartment, the iliotibial band, small glutes, etc. Suggesting working an entire myofascial plane with the foam roller is never broached by Hitzmann. The result is a technique that has difficulty expanding beyond specific locations of pain to move the client into a more integrative vision of the body.

That said, SI practitioners need to be familiar with MELT. It and other coming fascial fitness modalities will be a gateway for prospective clients to SI. Using foam rollers to maintain some of the gains from SI sessions is obvious, but the idea of being able to maintain fascial fitness through three ten-minute sessions per week, as MELT promises, seems inadequate. I say this as a daily foam-roller user and as a practitioner who introduces clients to the foam roller as a maintenance tool in their initial session.