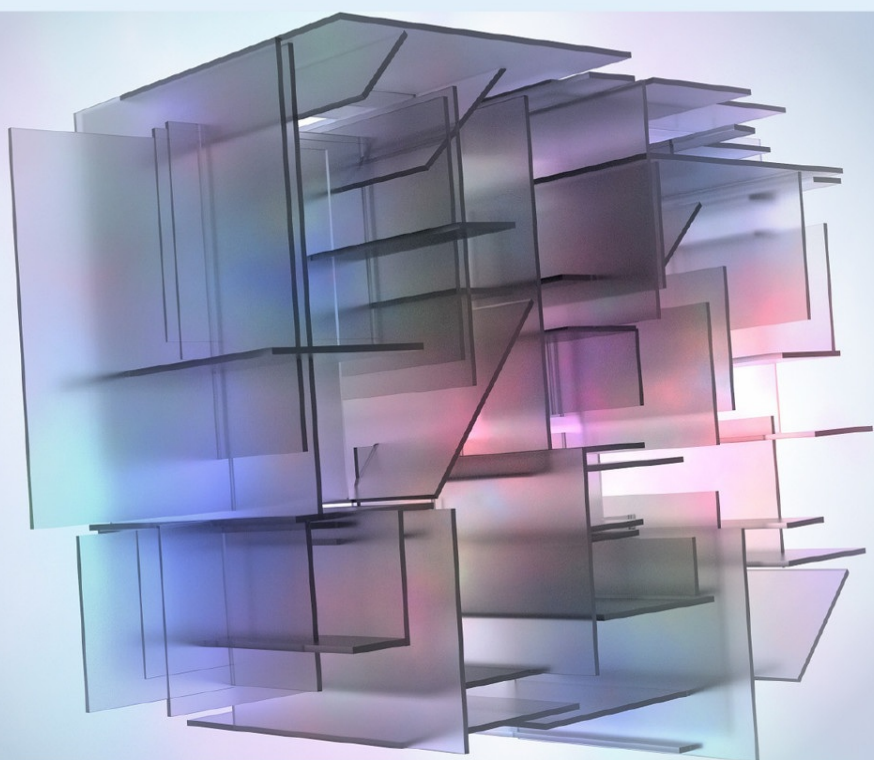


Psychotherapy Guidebook

STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION



Ida P. Rolf

Structural Integration

Ida P. Rolf

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *The Psychotherapy Guidebook* edited by Richie Herink and Paul R. Herink

All Rights Reserved

Created in the United States of America

Copyright © 2012 by Richie Herink and Paul Richard Herink

Table of Contents

[DEFINITION](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[TECHNIQUE](#)

[APPLICATIONS](#)

Structural Integration

Ida P. Rolf

DEFINITION

Structural Integration (or rolfing, as it is often called) is not primarily a psychotherapeutic approach to the problems of humans, but the effect it has had on the human psyche has been so noteworthy that many people insist on so regarding it. It is an approach to the personality through the components of the physical body. As an approach, it integrates and balances the so-called other bodies of man, metaphysically described as astral and eteric, now more modernly designated as the psychological, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects.

HISTORY

Structural Integration, developed by myself during the 1930s and 1940s, reflects my observations on the physics of human structure and the violation of the laws of physics evidenced in all too many “average” human bodies. I believe that as human structures conform more strictly to the reality that physics would describe as competent, a great deal of the bioenergy of the human can be conserved.

The amazing psychological changes that appeared in individuals following Structural Integration were completely unexpected by me. They inevitably suggest that behavior on any level directly reflects the physical energy level of the initiating physical structure.

There is a hierarchy of behavioral needs, ranging from a bare minimum for the use of the individual to a generous overflow applicable to cultural requirements. In traveling up this hierarchy, behavior manifests itself as more altruistic and less aggressive only as the amount of energy available in the physical body can permit it.

TECHNIQUE

It is impossible in an article of this length to give a description of the technique other than to say that the basic law of rolfing is the same in any situation. The rolfer, trained to see deviations from the template of the body, through directed pressure brings deviant myofascial connective tissue components toward their normal position, as defined by the template. He then requires the part to move in its physiological pattern. Such movement may be gross and conscious, as in the legs walking or knees bending, or more subtly refined and less consciously controlled, as in the chest and abdomen in respiration.

To this extent, rolfing is a manipulative technique dependent on the

rolfer. In that it requires the client's active willingness, conscious cooperation, and control in movement during the brief time of the process of change, it demands responsibility on his part and recognition of his goal and purposes. The psychological effect of rolfing is far greater than one would expect to induce in this brief encounter of ten hours of work (the normal cycle for integration as seen by rolfers). This effect, however, can be understood if we see it as the emergence of a different behavior pattern resulting from the very much greater competence of physical myofascial organization.

The degree of correlation here has not yet been studied. But it is reasonably well established that these behavior changes are not linked one-to-one with local areas, but demand an improved level of operation of the whole human. In other words, Structural Integration can be seen only as a holistic approach to greater competence in the human being.

APPLICATIONS

Rolfing postulates on the basis of its observation that a human is basically an energy field operating in the greater energy of the earth, particularly that energy known as the gravitational field. As such, the individual's smaller field can be enhanced or depleted in accordance with the spatial relations of the two fields. Rolfing, in integrating structure, changes the individual's field in such a way that it is supported and enhanced by the

greater field of the earth (gravity).

Since the energy field of the earth acts as a vertical at the earth's surface, to be supported the physical body of the individual must be balanced around a vertical. Any deviation from the vertical either as a whole or in localized segments allows the gravity field to act detrimentally with respect to the human being. Fortunately, this physical body is a plastic medium, thanks to the quality of its collagen structure. By pressure it can be forced away from its original position, as happens in experiences involving physical trauma. But equally through the application of pressure, it can be restored to the spatial relation that coincides with and accepts the energy field of the earth, the gravity field.

At this point it would seem appropriate to state that following Structural Integration, (rolfing) a man's greater awareness suggests to him that his energy has been increased. In fact, rolfing has simply made his energy more available. His greater structural competence makes it possible to utilize his energy more efficiently.

Rolfing is not intended as a medical technique nor as a solution to medical problems. Rather it is a most fundamental nonsymptom-oriented method for the growth and development of human competence and potential on any level.

