

# A TRIBUTE

80 years...and still a Pioneer!



Ida P. Rolf, Ph.D.

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# *Birthday Blessings to Dr. Ida Rolf*

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The name of Ida Rolf and her scientific system of structural integration are indivisible. There is, in fact, a strange mystique about all this and a hint of something remarkably self-validating.

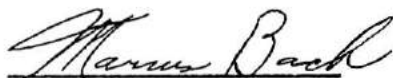
This discovery and development in the healing arts cannot actually be described as a treatment, a manipulation, an adjustment, massage or therapy. The only way to refer to it and identify it is ROLFING. It seems to me that this semantic and what might be called an "inter-fascial" relationship, suggests that discoverer and the thing to be discovered had a touch of divine determinism.

ROLFING is as descriptive as Dr. Rolf is dedicated, and this is the combination through which the world usually receives new skills and contributions in fields which serve the betterment of all mankind.

Dr. Ida's name is clearly immortalized in ROLFING and ROLFING is immortalized through her name. All of this must have been foreordained some eighty years ago. If I had discovered this system in the area of health and wellbeing can you imagine having it called "BACHING?" If Richard Stenstadvold had been the channel for its expression would it have succeeded under the term "STENSTADVOLDING?" It just couldn't and wouldn't have worked under any other name or term than ROLFING.

That is why this is a day of special remembrance, a day of dedication and love to the high calling of one Dr. Ida Rolf who was true to the mission of her remarkable life and who looks forward with creative vision to ever-unfolding contributions in the years ahead. All of which is as it should be.

With admiration and affection,



Marcus Bach

1976

*About the Author:* MARCUS BACH, world traveler, author, and popular interpreter of inter-cultural relations is founder and director of the Foundation for Spiritual Understanding, an international, inter-faith fellowship. The Foundation has as its basic aim testing practical, creative approaches to the individual's role in modern life and his spiritual integration.

# STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION

## A Contribution to the Understanding of Stress

Ida P. Rolf, Ph.D.

*Abstract.* Structural integration of the human body into the gravity field brings about changes in the man as a whole — his psychology, his metabolism, his action pattern. This paper and that which follow explore theoretical models which may underlie these changes and report on the results of research projects validating the technique. (The second paper, by Dr. Julian Silverman, will appear in a subsequent issue.)

When his physical body gets into difficulties, trouble spreads to the whole man. It affects his consciousness, and he calls it stress. Many approaches, physical and psychological, have been used by men in their efforts to escape — drugs and massage among the oldest of these. What is the first requirement to relieve this stress? What are the principles defining stress in man? In the new approach to the physical man called Structural Integration, absence of stress is seen as balanced function — the balance of the body within the field of gravity. This is a new definition; stress is imbalance, visible as the inappropriate position of body components in space.

The technique of Structural Integration is basically twofold: by manipulation, the soft tissue is brought toward its normal (anatomically efficient) position; calling for what we consider appropriate movement then allows the structure to realign itself. Change in the structure is made permanent through new patterns of movement; reciprocally, new patterns of movement are made possible by the new organization. Our attempt in this discussion is to explore principles underlying balanced functioning and to relate these to the technique called Structural Integration. The paper that immediately follows discusses experimental data validating the technique.

Rehabilitation of the whole man calls for more than a random stretching of local areas. Wider implications must be considered. Selye's insight reported in 'The Stress of Life', published in 1956, that stress is a nonspecific element of disease (dis-ease), as well as its consequence, is basic. So is his concept of an adaptive energy as part of man's biological inheritance. Selye [1956] suggests connective tissue, fascia, as an integral component of the stress syndrome. These ideas are fundamental. They generated a universal interest, yet little significant progress has been made in applications which could add to the comfort of the individual man. Instead, obvious clues indicating the significance of fascia in personal well-being have been ignored.

After stress situations, most individuals intuitively attempt to relieve their own disturbed pattern by 'resting'. They equate this with slumping, slouching, or lying down. Seemingly, no one has drawn the logical conclusion that the gravity disaster is a major — a very major — component of stress.

The interaction of the physical man and his surrounding gravitational field illuminates the role of gravity in stress. This interaction is based on balance and therefore on the laws of mechanics as applied to physical bodies. The musculoskeletal system, especially its myofascial component, is the intermediary between the vital organism and its outer environment. Structural balance begins in the myofascial components of the body; it affects the chemistry and thus the physiology of the organism. This has long been surmised; up to now, however, it has not been studied in this light. Realizing the role of connective tissue in manipulation, osteopathic workers did considerable research in the field.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See articles by Erlingheuser [1959], Taylor [1958], Gratz [1936, 1937] and Little [1969] as given in the references. The article by Little [1969] summarizes and documents the osteopathic contributions to the field.



Ida and Peter Caddy  
Fendhorn, 1976



Ida and John Denver  
Boulder, Colorado, 1974

# IDA P. ROLF, Ph.D.

## HUMANITARIAN \* SCHOLAR \* INNOVATOR

Ida P. Rolf, Ph.D. received her Ph.D. in Biological Chemistry from Columbia University in 1919. Following her graduation from Barnard she was a member of the Organic Chemistry Department of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research where her special assignment was investigating the chemical structure of nervous system lipids. The conclusions of her and her colleagues were published over a period of a decade in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*.

Seeking an answer to personal and family health problems, Dr. Rolf started intensive personal investigation into the effect of structure on well-being. The methods available at the time seemed inadequate for actual structural change. Slowly the technique known as Structural Integration ("rolfing") was developed. It became obvious that the method she had designed primarily for postural improvement was also a clue to better functioning in a human being. Soon the patent fact that structural improvement of the physical body contributed generously to psychological well-being was recognized. That fact is being subjected to scientific validation at this time.

Dr. Rolf has, for the past two decades, been training rolfers and has completed work on her forthcoming book *rolfing: The Integration of Human Structures* being published by Dennis-Landman Company of Santa Monica, California.

*Editor's note: The measure of a personality is more than noting chronological events in an individual's life or even recounting accomplishments as much of the world notes achievement. We offer here a personal narration about who Ida Rolf is — as written by Jack Downing, M.D., a certified rolfer, member of the ROLF INSTITUTE and a respected friend of Dr. Rolf.*

I first knew Ida as a sturdy, quiet, seventy-year old lady of uncommon solidness and alertness, present at Esalen in 1965 at Fritz Perl's instigation. Fritz said that her attentions were valuable. Since I was guided by Fritz at that time, I undertook to be 'rolfed,' whatever that was. Note that I was a psychiatrist and mental health administrator of some twenty years standing then, and that although I considered myself avant-garde psychologically consequent to my work in social psychiatry and my daring to use LSD and go to Esalen with Fritz, I was pill-and scalpel-oriented as your average practitioner. To me, body manipulation was done by technicians called physical therapists, while massage was a pleasant trifle. (Generally, the higher one's medical standing, the less the body is seen and/or touched. Social standing is inversely proportionate to the amount of skin exposed, hence, for example, senators, bankers and expensive lawyers wear neckties, vests, and hose up to their knees. Cardiologists have more status than dermatologists; brain surgeons, than orthopedists.) So, Ida's thing involving continuous and direct manipulation of the body was obviously suspect. Of course, her equally obvious respectability and modesty vouched for her even in the humid atmosphere of the Esalen mineral baths.

And despite my fogginess about what this deep and often painful massage-manipulation of my muscles and sinews actually *did*, diverse experiences convinced me that this shrewd, muscular old lady knew what she was doing. For example, we reached the fifth of the ten basic hours of structural integration: in the process of opening and releasing the front of the torso she was stretching and releasing the lower left side of my belly, just above the groin, I experienced a stabbing, needle-like pain in an old scar on my left hip. With total, you-are-there recall, I relived an accident thirty years before, including being sewn up at home without anesthesia by our family GP. Both doctor and mother kept saying, "Hold still now! Don't move!" And hold still I did, and I continued to "Hold still!"