

Commentary on Mikael Kindborg's Rosen Movements and Words

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While I was on vacation with family in Ireland last August, I took some time to catch up on my Rosen Method International Journal reading. I was so delighted to find an article on Rosen Movement, the very first one so far in our journal. I would first like to congratulate and to thank Mikael Kindborg for his research, in-depth study, and presentation of this important article. I am quite certain, now that the ice has been broken, that his article will inspire and encourage many of us in the future to write about Rosen Movement.

As a Rosen Movement Intern, *Rosen Movements and Words*, has really encouraged and supported me in my own preparation, reflection and experience of giving, and attending, Rosen Movement classes. It has helped to expand my knowledge, awareness and consciousness, and to take more responsibility for the outcome, goals and experience of a class as intended by Rosen Movement. Now I have a framework against which to study and evaluate my own movement classes. I can ask myself which of my key factors added to the flow and aliveness of the class, what assisted the participants to feel more secure, what helped them to experience the joy of moving together? It is not something that just happened by chance. On the other hand, when there is insecurity and hesitation, I can also examine my use of words and body movements, and how they may have contributed to that experience.

Kindborg, in his very detailed and thorough rendering of the use of words in Rosen Movement, highlights the complexity of a Rosen Movement class. For the teacher there is so much involved in the communication aspect, both verbal and visual, with the use of words and the body. These are furthermore synchronized with previously selected music to enhance the experience, enjoyment and flow of the class. Indeed, with clearly expressed terms, the movement teacher has to multi-task on many different levels.

When I first became a student of this movement, as someone with a musical background who found great joy and delight in movement, I thought I would sail smoothly through the learning process. My experience has been indeed not quite so. To actually teach the movements and give verbal instructions while doing so is a bigger challenge than I expected. Kindborg has helped me to understand and appreciate why there is so much learning involved for a student of Rosen Movement. I am amazed by the amount of information and his exploration in the sections on "The Role of Words," and "Giving Instructions for Movement." He clarifies for us how words can make us feel, how they either create tension or ease, how words are used, what we say, how and when we say it, how few or how many words we use, the tone of voice and intonation, together with the pauses and silences. All these elements have a great impact on how participants understand and perform the movements, and contribute to their experience and flow of the class. As there are five different sections in a class, all these guidelines are re-evaluated and integrated.

The art of the teacher is to adapt as the purpose, focus, and intention of each section changes. All this information wakes up my understanding and appreciation of the complexity, specialness, and uniqueness of Rosen Movement.

I had not given too much detailed thought about how communication works in a Rosen Movement class before reading Kindborg's article. In the section on *Communication Theory*, and in a later section, "Timing and Preparation of Movements," Kindborg talks about what exactly contributes to a continuous flow of coordinated action between teacher and participants, and also between participants. I understand better that the precise way in which the teacher communicates with words, body movements, and music can influence this flow of coordinated actions so that the class can perform the movements, enjoy them and benefit from them. In the section, "Timing and Preparation of Movements," Kindborg talks about the principle of anticipation, used by Disney animators, that is directly applicable to teaching a movement class. Anticipation is used to prepare the audience for the next action. In a Rosen Movement class the teacher can prepare for the next movement by beginning the verbal instruction before starting the actual movement and continue the instruction during the movement with words spoken slightly ahead of the movement.

Just when I thought the article was complete, that Kindborg had covered everything imaginable about the topic, I read on to discover that the author had developed things even further for us. Without leaving it for us teachers to work out for ourselves further details and applications based on what he had already covered about the use of words, he elaborates even further on the use of words in the five different sections of a class, as the purpose of each one is different.

I have appreciated Kindborg's reflections throughout the article, based on his own personal experience and on the observations he made in the classes he taught, as well as from attending other Rosen Movement classes. I look forward in the future to using these important principles and guidelines, brought so clearly to my attention, to improve upon the flow and group experience of my movement classes. This work will in time, I imagine, become a classic and I already hear the author's name being quoted in Rosen Movement circles in the years to come.

In conclusion, while discussing Kindborg's article in the Rosen Movement class I am assisting at present in the Rosen Method Berkeley Center, a very interesting and engaging discussion emerged about the essence of Rosen Movement. This aspect of Rosen Movement is so important – this different and special kind of movement – that I would like to share our discussion with our readers at this time. Present in the discussion were two Rosen Movement senior teachers, one intern, and five students. The following are the main points that emerged from our discussion together:

Rosen Movement allows one's essence to be as full as it can be and we teach from that place. It is about playing with all the ways we hold back both in our bodies and in life. In the movements our bodies are revealed to us as they are. They reach inwardly to touch and open us so that we can authentically show and reveal more of ourselves, and reach out in our lives. As we move we invite more ease, aliveness, and more of our nature to come forth. As one student stated, "I feel more joyful and confident." We open to a greater awareness within our bodies which allows change to happen. Furthermore, old habits and patterns of holding and moving can dissolve over time. As we open up to other possibilities of being, and when we move differently, we discover other dimensions of ourselves. Feeling our inner selves as part of a group moving together helps to unite inner and outer awareness.

The vitality and aliveness that happens in Rosen Movement cannot be taught, and we recalled Marion's words that went something like this: *this Movement cannot be taught, but it can be learned.* Rosen Movement

has to be embodied, it comes from within the person and when it is there we feel it. It is about being in the words we speak as we teach the movements. From the outside Rosen Movement looks so simple, yet it is both complex and profound at the same time, as Kindborg's article reveals to us in such great detail and depth.

Finally, I would like to thank Mikael for the gift of his article which inspired our rich and deep sharing about Rosen Movement. It facilitated so well our exploration about what makes this unique and different kind of movement so special to each of us and a gift to our world today.