

Rosen Method promotes emotional awareness

BEING ON A WINDY sea without a sail is to be taken whichever way the wind blows. However, to have a sail—and to know how to use it—allows us to work with the wind and have it be a support to us. In the same way, an awareness of our emotional selves allows us to stop living unintentional and unconscious lives. This awareness can help us heal from the many emotional traumas that life can bring, and to be even more resilient for it.

We are emotional beings. We have evolved in such a way that we use emotions to shape our actions, our beliefs, and our allegiances. To be conscious and aware of our emotional lives is part of what makes us human. However, many of us have learned to separate our emotions from our awareness of them, and that is what the touch-based form of communication called Rosen Method Bodywork addresses.

Our ability to sense, utilizing the largest sense organ we have—our skin—is the first way we understand relationship. Skin provides a boundary and helps to define our edges. Every emotion has a physical component, inwardly and outwardly. For instance, fear might be that funny feeling in the stomach, or it might manifest as shaking. Rosen touch draws our attention from deep inside to the skin, and from the skin to deep inside. The intention of our touch, is to leave space for the person being touched to experience what he or she needs to, without judgment and without being too busy or in a hurry. When we begin to feel and trust who we are, we record these experiences with systems of perception—the heart and nervous system. This is how we learn and change.

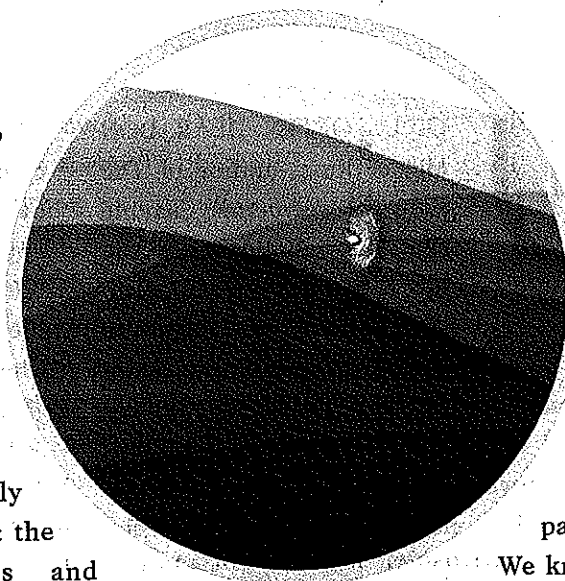
By defining more clearly the complex systems of the brain, the heart, and the chemical responses and interactions that regulate what goes on inside of us, recent

scientific research has begun to validate what touch practitioners have been utilizing in their work for years. Gentle connected touch, used in Rosen Method Bodywork, produces at least one hormone (oxytocin) that brings a sense of calm and connection and counteracts the stress hormone (adrenalin). The heart is intimately connected to the parts of the brain: the amygdala (emotional memories and processing), the thalamus (sensory experience), the hippocampus (memory, spatial relationships, and the extraction of meaning from sensory input from the environment) and, the cortex (problem solving, reasoning, and learning).

Every living thing generates a field of electromagnetic energy. When this energy is exchanged between beings, it is perceived by the heart, and that perception resonates in the brain. Together they confer to make decisions. When those decisions are in harmony, we are living our truth, and we can relax. Stephen Buhner speaks of an “intelligence of the heart in the direct perception of nature,” saying “When we are cared for or care for others, the heart releases an entirely different cascade of hormonal and neurotransmitter substances than it does in other, less hopeful circumstances.”

All of this research supports the ideas, expressed by Thomas Lewis, et al, in *A General Theory of Love*, that “we are hard wired emotional beings” and “when we heed our hearts and draw strength from relatedness we thrive.” The Rosen Method acknowledges the importance and power of these naturally available mechanisms and utilizes them in our search for integrating and healing the hurts that happen in life.

We can't just tell ourselves to lose weight. We can't be unafraid when we are afraid. The cortex, in evolutionary terms, is a much



younger part of the brain, and won't win out over the older, more emotional and relational parts of the brain.

We know it would be healthier to lose weight, and we overeat. We need to reveal or feel the emotional aspects of overeating. We need to be with our fears, not deny them. This is why body-based therapies are useful for experiences that we understand but that haven't changed with the understanding. The body stores the information until we can process it. Our language expresses this idea well: We “shoulder” responsibility; I can't “stomach” that, etc. While this holding of experience often helps us through hard times, if we hang on too long to this stored information it can come to work against us, with consequences ranging from physical pain to emotional distance from ourselves and others.

By working to more fully integrate the heart and mind, the Rosen Method uses the resulting emotional awareness to help transform lives that feel perilous in the winds of change into purposeful and conscious voyages of affirmation.

□ by MARJORIE HUEBNER

Marjorie Huebner is a Rosen Method Bodywork practitioner, Rosen movement teacher and facilitator of Authentic Movement. Go to www.rosenmethodmn.org to find other Rosen practitioners in Minnesota, Dorothea Hrossowyc, Louisa Castner, and Sheri Krall. □