

Tom Myers interview

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K: I remember that growing up you learned how to sail a boat...knowing the work you do, and in the human body you're constantly working with systems of tension and slack, I was wondering how being in coastal Maine with the sailing background might have influenced the work you're doing.

T: I have said in other places that the best training that I got for doing bodywork – before actually training in bodywork – was sailing a boat. Not for the reasons that you suggested, of the balance of tension and compression – that occurred to me much later, the analogy between a sailboat's standing rigging and a human's running rigging – more for the reason that when you're sailing a boat you need to and you're invited to pay attention with all of your senses.

You need to be watching the air, what's going on with the boat, and far to sea, where you are in the ocean, and you're listening to the sound of the wind in the rigging and sound of the lough in the sails and feeling the pull of the tiller and the movement of the boat in the water, all of those things are really necessary to pay attention to.

So the tuning of my senses in a sailboat showed up in a different way, in the fact that when I'm working with someone, I'm listening to what they say, the tone of voice, I'm listening to what they don't say, I'm feeling them and watching their body structure, smelling what comes off of them...all the senses need to be engaged. They're all sources of information for me, obviously.

A lot of information coming up my hands. When I teach, people will come and say, teach me this technique or that technique and I'm always really wanting to teach listening, because if you understand how to listen with your hands you can make up techniques. Techniques are a dime a dozen compared to the ability to really listen.

K: What was it, then, that eventually brought you to bodywork?

T: I had grown up here until I was 13 and like most kids in a small town I couldn't wait to get out. I loved it when I was tiny and was running around the woods and the seashore, but it's a very dull place, Damariscotta, Maine, in the 1950s! About the most exciting thing going on, literally, was the pinball machine down at the bowling alley, spend time down there watching the kids jam the machine for a free game...I was really eager to get out.

I came back after college and was working on the family business – I worked for Tom's of Maine. It was called the Kennebunk Chemical Center then! Not a very salubrious name and we didn't make anything consumer, we made 55 gallon drums of cleaner for milk trucks and steam cleaner for engines. It was still environmentally friendly cleaners but Tom had come from a background of industrial stuff, not personal care. [story about ClearLake laundry detergent]

I worked for him for a year, it was just Tom, me and Jane, it was way back at the beginning of his thing because he had been talking to my father as both as an investor and a business advisor.

Then I started an aquaculture company with my dad up here in Damariscotta and I just went crazy I guess... You think, oh my God if I stay here I'm going to be in this little town again and following in my family's footsteps and I just wanted to see the world and this was in the early 70s...

In those days the country was tipped, so if you were a little loose you started rolling towards California. So I did! I got at first as far as Colorado I was just very young had a van, living in a van, didn't know what to do, taking flying lessons and trying to get a pilot's license for want of a better thing to do. I was doing this in Boulder, and it was at that time was just starting as the spiritual capital of the west, you know...20 square miles surrounded by reality and these people had commandeered all the frat houses, the frat houses went down University Hill and the frats had been kicked out or were no longer doing much and spiritual life had taken out...

So tibetan buddhism and Trungpo was in one house and Arica was in another frat house and Swami Sachininanda was in another frat house and probably the Hare Krishnas, I don't know, but they were all in these big frat houses because nobody else could afford to rent them.

I think probably in search of social companionship...getting laid would be the other term for that...I went around to the open houses these things would have, just as a matter of interest, and got involved with this group called Arica, which was just fascinating. It was a spiritual group – it's pretty much defunct now and was hot at the time. IT was a wonderful thing, I wish it had survived.

It was a smorgasbord of spiritual techniques so I was spending I got intrigued enough to spend money on their training, which for a New England boy very difficult, spending money on yourself, not done in my New England family but I took this training and we were doing meditating and chanting and martial arts stuff and aerobic exercise and yoga...

It was just an all-day thing of one activity after another and a lot of psychological clearing and it was where I was first introduced to the enneagram and that kind of work. It was a literal clearing house, clearing out 23 years of junk and New England upbringing, I had a wonderful upbringing with my parents...

K: Did you have a religious upbringing at all, in the classic Christian sense?

T: My parents were non-denominational Protestants, so I didn't have a huge baggage of that. My father was a workaholic and I don't think I've ever gotten rid of that, I'm still a workaholic, but there was baggage about "Be strong, be perfect, be nice," all that stuff. So I had let that go, and crap of my own that I had picked up along the way that had nothing to do with my parents...and so there was some bodywork involved in that...

I don't make a distinction between movement and yoga and bodywork, I think it's all part of the same reconnection of the body, it's all part of the same movement. Some people use their hands, some people use their mouths and some people use movement, but it's all part of the same thing as far as I'm concerned...

Anyway, there were these people in the training – and Boulder was the center of Rolfing then, the Rolf Institute had just come to Boulder and set up, I didn't even know about it then – there were people in the Arica training going away and coming back with welts on their bodies saying "Uhh that was so wonderful!" I thought, are you kidding? what are you talking about?

One guy in the training was on his way to be a Rolfer and said, "Oh I'll show you," and he put his fists on my chest and filleted the skin off my sternum and my teeth started to tingle and I went, oh, far out!

A few months later I was in L.A. and I heard Ida Rolf wanted models for her class and I thought, this is great, cause you get [training] for really cheap and being 23 years old I didn't have a lot money to spend on all this stuff so by this time I was in Los Angeles and working a job but not earning very much money.

So I went to be a model and it turned out I couldn't be a model. Ida Rolf gave her lecture and she demo-ed on the guy I came down with -- he was one of those people that looks normal if you look at him from the front, but if you look at him from the side you can't see him almost because his front's right up against his spine – and in one hour she just made him a deeper person. His voice changed, and his breathing changed...this was somebody that was staying in the house I was in and I was really impressed with the change she had made in an hour.

But it turned out I couldn't be a model because there were too many of them so I very fortunately, Ida Rolf's assistant, who is now a teacher for the Rolf Institute, said that he would do the work with me after the class was over. Knowing what I know now about the kind of work you get in student classes, I was very pleased that I didn't have to be worked on by a student.

But also the other thing that went on was that the students would stay on after and ask questions they didn't dare ask when Ida Rolf was around. So I was getting an intellectual background in the work as well as getting the work by having these students attend my sessions and ask questions.

So at the end of that I really decided – having sampled a whole lot of things in what was then called the human potential movement, which I think is a better name than New Age – anyway I had sampled a lot of the stuff in that realm, learning Tai Ch'I and doing Gestalt therapy and going to the Est training which I think is called The Forum now – I just decided I always liked using my hands and I very much liked the thing in the Rolfing world of "if it works, use it, if it doesn't work, throw it out" there was no religion, nothing to believe in, it was very experiential and practical...

It was half art and half science. There was a science to anatomy and there was a science to human movement and kinesiology and physiology, but the actual practice of it was pretty artistic. So I loved that blend.

So I set out to do this, it took me a couple years. I had to get anatomy and physiology college credits and I had to get a kinesiology course which was not easy to find, I kind of constructed my own...

I went and got massage training at Berkeley and presented myself for training and was very fortunate to be trained directly by Ida Rolf in my practicing phase, and then in my advanced training I took the last training before she died. So it wasn't like I was a massage therapist and then grew into Rolting from that, I became a massage therapist on the way to becoming a Rolfer and probably only practiced massage for about six months, aside from the occasional session between it, certainly it's not that far away and the two things have grown together in the meantime.

Massage was pretty "fluff and buff" in those days...you have to remember in the early 1970s it was just beginning to pull away from its association with adult entertainment.

K: Even with Esalen Institute, doing what it was doing?

T: Well, Esalen Institute was doing what it was doing, but it had only been doing what it was doing for five years or so and the AMTA was just beginning to feel the effects of Bob King and Elliot Greene and some of the people who really changed it later, but at that time it was still pretty much the blue rinse set...it was a very different organization than what it is now.

After I became a Rolfer I worked for a couple of years in Little Rock, Ark. and then decided I wanted to understand body structure in different cultures, so I moved. I just bought one of those airplane tickets for around the world, which you could buy an around-the-world ticket for \$2000 in those days, and I went everywhere...at least through Europe and Africa and India and ended up in Nepal and then came back to America briefly and settled in England. I spent ten years in England, where I had practices in Germany, Italy and France, at different times, and a little bit in Australia and a couple of other places. Then I came back to Maine in about 1990 and have been living around Portland since then and have just moved up here.

I think it's really important that people get in contact with different cultures. It's kind of hard to be a good bodyworker all in your own culture.

K: Why is that, do you think? I mean I have an idea around that, but what would be your reasoning for that?

T: Because...Fritz Pearls used to talk about, "Well first I've got to deal with the chicken shit, then I've got to deal with the bull shit, and then the elephant shit, then you get down to my shit." Some of the chicken shit/bull shit level of things are cultural differences. Just to take an example, an example is personal space.

Americans and English people like a decent amount of personal space. Arabs would prefer to speak to you right up close...so Arabs would come into my practice and get up that close to speak to me because that's polite, and I would move away to be polite, and they would move up close to be polite...

and that's just a simple example but there are so many of these examples of differences in culture which I think really help you to understand people as they come to you. People have things that are out of the culture and they think they're crazy...they did that in the Soviet Union they put people in jail for having individualistic ideas because it was a communal thing. Here we put peo-

ple in jail for having communistic or socialistic ideas because we're a capitalist society. If you don't have that in mind, if you haven't seen what it's like to live in another society, then you have no idea what, in your client's patterns, is actually individual and what is contra-social.

Something that's contrasocial, I don't think you should automatically try to change in a person.

K: Not to mention all the variety of body types... where an individual or culture carries stress... I almost tire, when I ask someone what's going on in their bodies, it's this triangle (referring to upper trapezius and neck) up here...it just fascinates me, I would love to be in another country where I could see, is there another society that has constant strain in their calves? What are the mental rigors we put ourselves through as Americans that causes...?

T: Okay, so that's a really good example. Some of that is biomechanical and it's going to be world-over that things tend to migrate towards the top of a tall thin structure with a small base of support. If you look at the biomechanics of a circus tent the strain is right up at the top of the center pole. So it's not uncommon that people have that kind of strain the world over. But, you do not find [condition] that so commonly in native cultures.

K: Ah ha!

T: They will complain of their lower back, of their legs..but it's not the universal "my neck and my shoulders."

If we look at this in America, emotionality in America is not highly prized and treasured. Drama is, but real emotion isn't. So people tend to shut down here, in the heart chakra and the solar plexus chakra, in this area of the body people tend to shut down because they can't express emotionality really well, and in the solar plexus, if you open up that drawer of the body and look, you would see all kinds of things about absorption: the liver is about absorption, the stomach is about what you take in, the diaphragm is about bringing in the air. The solar plexus governs that. It's the main abdominal brain, and the abdominal brain is saying, "What shall I make me? What shall I take into me and make part of me?"

That's what's felt about in that section of the body. So if you take that psychic level, it's how do I take love in to myself? How do I accept love in?

Well, in the American culture, and to a lesser degree in the European culture, billions and billions and billions of dollars are being spent every year to make sure that you don't love yourself and that the products they're holding up will make it possible for you to like yourself just a little bit.

But you're too fat, your skin's not good enough, your looks aren't good enough...just the whole thing of doing you down comes again and again and again. So people sort of shut down: Oh God, I'm clearly inadequate. It's all over this society but it's written into the commercial fabric of the consumer society.

So people shut down here (referring to solar plexus)...when they shut down here, the head gets pulled forward, something has to hold the head on so these muscles (upper trapezius and neck) go nuts.

It's the muscles that are under strain that talk to people, not the ones that are contracted. You have to make that distinction between those that are locked short, concentrically loaded, and those that are locked long, or strained, or eccentrically loaded. The concentrically loaded muscles rarely talk out loud to people. They are still tense, but they're silently tense. The ones that are eccentrically loaded, the myosin and actin are way out on the edges of their contact, and they tend to get lots and lots of trigger points and noisy things in them.

But you do not want to work – if you're really trying to sort those people out – you do not want to work on the ones they're pointing to and complaining about. Of course you have to work on them so they feel heard, but if you only work on [those muscles] you are going to make them slowly worse and worse and worse.

If you like doing the same thing again and again to the same people over and over again, then that's an adequate way to run your practice but...

K: That's something I've noticed palpating my own musculature, the areas where I have chronic tension...I have a lot of scar tissue up here [referring to occiput] from a whiplash injury I had when I was small, on top of some spinal curvature as well. When I have the most pain on my right side is when this left side is tightest, and the right side isn't tight at all. Very often when I'm working on someone else I notice that as well...the area of complaint, the texture, the quality of the skin, everything...it's a little zingy, but usually the zinginess is somewhere else, and usually it's a situation of, "Oh I didn't know that hurt!"

T: So often pectoralis minor and **subcostal arch** and maybe the belly and maybe even the groin are the places along the front line...if we were to take your question a little deeper and go into the idea that for most of our evolutionary history the belly was against the ground and the back was against the air, so danger came from above, not up from below very much.

So all your soft squidshy bits are on the front side of your body: throat, breasts, groin, genitals, belly. Now, we are – along with penguins and maybe kangaroos – stupid enough to take those soft sensitive bits and rear ourselves up on our hind legs so that all those soft sensitive bits are coming into the world pretty much in the front of the body. So we take the most sensitive parts of the body and bring it into the world that way. Most animals, like cats, bring the level of the spine and the level of the gut is also the level of motivation. But we have our spine vertically and our gut vertically but we motivate horizontally so we have our gut up front in a way.

K: There's also a benefit to being horizontal in that you're connected to the energy of the earth. It's a safety net.

T: So this is the idea of massage in general and Rolfing in particular is to reconnect us with the earth, because, in a way, we got out of this not a hundred years ago with the Industrial Revolution or 10,000 years ago with the Agricultural Revolution but 4 million years ago when we came

down out of the trees and started to walk, if indeed that ever happened...but in any case, we have to expect that when you take all these sensitive things and put them up front, and given the assaults on sensitivity we have on our planet and in our family systems that people would shut down along the front line to protect. It's a really common thing.

Almost all of those things in the back are resting on shortness in the front, along that sensitive line.

K: And culturally we spend so much of our time focusing on TVs or computer monitors and the balance of the head constantly forward. Since I'm not doing corporate work anymore and am doing massage therapy I've found over the years that I have more ability to use my strength through the sternum and the abdominals. Before it was something I could manage briefly, but not ever where I would actually find myself in that position.

T: I think we also have to concern ourselves with not imposing proper posture on our clients. The interest that I have is that people are able to go into these patterns and then come out again. Because if you're really focusing on a piece – I'm a writer, so if I'm really focusing on a piece of writing and I'm on the computer it's really hard for me to not go into it with my head and get really passionate about it and get into a particular posture. The question is, when I'm finished writing, do I come out of it again?

The mother who carries the baby on her hip, her upper body will go away from the hip she carries the baby on, it's just natural counter balance and you have to do that, you have to do that if you're carrying a bag of groceries, carrying a baby, the question is when you put the baby down do you then come back to the center? And what happens is these things get written into the connective tissue in such a way that we are *always* walking around with the baby on our hip or the attache case in our left hand or the position in which we drive...and it's really hard to do anything about the position in which you sleep.

And then the question is, when you get up in the morning do you drop all that and find your place in relationship to the earth?

So I try to help people find a home that they can come back to, but not something that they're going to stay in rigidly for the rest of their lives.

K: That was something I was going to ask you, Where do you see the difference between what you've created with Structural Integration and what you learned from Ida Rolf?

T: Oh man, I am a tiny dwarf standing on the shoulder of a large giant. Almost everything that I got I took from Ida Rolf. And other people I studied with...everybody makes a synthesis of who they study with. My studies with Buckminster Fuller, who wasn't a bodyworker at all, were really important, and with Moshe Feldenkrais and Judith Aston and Emily Conrad...all of these people have contributed. But I haven't done much with Structural Integration...I learned it from Ida Rolf and after you've been doing it for 25 years you have a little license to put your own ideas into it.

So with that preface, I think her method is too harsh for this time. The reputation that Rolfing and Structural Integration...Structural Integration, by the way, was her name for her work. Rolfing was a nickname that came to it when she was at Esalen. She hated that, she didn't want her name to be in it, but Structural Integration had too many syllables for Americans, so Rolfing stuck...So she started the Rolf Institute and things came along.

Now she started working in yoga and moving people into the yoga asanas and then seeing where they didn't stretch into the posture and kind of grabbing the tissue and stretching it for them so they could achieve the yoga posture, that's how she got started.

K: Wow!

T: After she ran into osteopathy, she added osteopathic soft tissue manipulation to what she was doing and it became table work. then she developed this ten-session series, starting with a seven-session series and then made it into a ten-session series. I think the ten-session series is a brilliant piece of work. People ask, how can you do the same ten sessions with everybody and of course the answer is, you don't. You're doing a recipe but your recipe changes with each person ...you know, "what's in the kitchen?"...your recipe is going to change with that.

And likewise if I have somebody who is tall and thin and has a way-forward pelvis, that's going to be a very different set of sessions from a person who is shorter or fatter and whose pelvis is behind their feet. It varies a whole lot with who's coming in. But the idea of unfolding the body from the surface to the deep and integrating the two works very well with most people.

So I think her work was brilliant. I think that it had two minor shortcomings that I wanted to fix: one of them was that it deals with hinging movements, with flexion/extension movements better than it deals with rotational movements, spirals. Since so much of human movement is spirals, it was too bad that it wasn't dealt with more forthrightly in the context of Rolfing. Rolfing had a lot to do with what's too far forward, what's too far back, in other words flexion, anterior tilts of the pelvis, head's too far forward and the chest is too far back, but it just doesn't explicitly deal with rotations as well.

So I added a session on the spirals in the body. And then the arms – because the arms hang off the structural column rather than being in the structural column – the arms always got short shrift. So I added a session with the arms.

But the other thing I really would call my addition is that she gave us the recipe – "let's do this because I said so" – the logic of why the recipe unfolds this way was not available. So I reconfigured the Structural Integration recipe in terms of myofascial continuities that I call Anatomy Trains.

K: I remember reading that Anatomy Trains was something you came up with while you were teaching anatomy?

T: Yeah, it was just a game to interest students in anatomy, which is hard enough with all these Latin names and endless barrels of detail...anatomy is not the most interesting thing to learn. So

I was trying to make it more interesting. I was also trying to follow Ida's idea that the fascia is everywhere the muscles aren't and the fascia is continuous. So to give this idea of how the muscles are strung together...

K: How long did you teach anatomy?

T: I started teaching anatomy in 1981. And it increasingly took over my life, I became a teacher for the Rolf Institute in anatomy in '87, and was chair of that department from 91 to 93...and was developing this Anatomy Trains idea over most of this time. Then Leon Chaitow, who runs this journal out of England, came to me and said we need an article so I decided I would write it up. The article was so popular that the publisher came to me and said, we want a book out of this... so from 97 to 2001 I was pretty much immersed in trying to turn it out...

K: And now your book's out.

T: The book's out and it's doing very well. It's sold over 12,000 copies now which for a textbook like that I was going to be pleased if it sold 3,000.

K: When I took your Anatomy Trains workshop in Boston, you were in the process of working on the book. I have the photocopies of all the articles you did for Massage magazine...I don't have your Anatomy Trains book...I have the feeling these articles are different from your Anatomy Trains book?

T: Well they want me to do those articles again now as a book, the Body Cubed articles. Those articles were designed as a regional anatomy, in other words you start with the feet, the lower legs and then the knees, the thighs, then to the pelvis and sacroiliac and then to the spine and then chest and so on...it worked up the body in a regional way. The idea of the Anatomy Trains was a longitudinal anatomy -- what are the connections longitudinally?

So there's very little overlap between the two books, and I'm hoping to recast the Massage magazine articles as a book in itself. But I haven't got the time right at the moment.

K: You're teaching a lot also. Where do you go when you teach?

T: Well I just got back from England and Germany and France, Monday I'll go to Montana...I teach all over the states...I was in Puerto Rico this winter...the book has been translated into Japanese so I'm REALLY hoping for an invitation to Japan...I have a lot of invitations to Australia but my wife is unable to travel so I don't want to go that far away. I'm away from home enough as it is.

So I'm starting to do trainings here in Maine and ask people to come to me instead of exporting myself all over the place...I'm going to try to import students.

K: I got your brochure about bringing students here...where are you going to have people stay? Right across the street?

T: Yep. Because the classroom isn't here, the classroom you passed is about a half mile up. Across from the Darling Center you'll see a kind of newish building with a green roof like this one and she purpose built that upper room for her own work but she rents it out for her own work...it's a beautiful light airy classroom. So I'm very glad to have that there, and the house across the street is available for students to stay in...

K: You can create a sort of Anatomy Trains Institute...! The Tom Myers Institute!

T: Uhhh...no you're not going to find my name on it.. Kinesis is the name of my company... I'd prefer to keep my name out of it ...kinesis is Greek for "Guided Movement" So I figure guiding people in movement is essentially what I'm doing...

K: Would that be a goal for you eventually, to do less travel and to have more of a central location?

T: It's not eventually, this is a goal for me right now...I spend 30 weeks a year on the road and it's just got to stop.

K: How many years have you been doing that?

T: Umm...it's gotten steadily worse...I was traveling a lot out of the Rolf Institute and back but with the popularity of the Anatomy Trains idea I've been on the road a lot in the last few years. I've just had it with airplanes and all that stuff.

K: International relations being what they are, I can't imagine that would make it any easier.

T: It makes it a little harder.

K: I also wanted to ask you about the Kinesis Movement class that you're doing with people who are not specifically bodyworkers... I remember reading...is that also part of your travels, is that what you're teaching as you're traveling or is that something you're developing separately from your Anatomy Trains?

T: Yeah there are a couple of works of my heart that have not proven commercially successful yet but that I keep teaching from time to time when I can, and one of these is the Kinesis Movement idea, which is developmental movement training.

I worked on a doctor in London once and he said, "This is great work that you're doing here. I go in to the hospital every day {and of course this is in England where there's a national health system} and there are these people drowning in this river and I pull them out of the river and I knock the water out of them and give them artificial respiration and I set them up on a chair and as soon as they're breathing alright there's somebody else I have to grab them, knock the water out, sit them up in a chair....I don't have time to go upstream and find out why they're all falling in."

And we, as bodyworkers, that's what we're doing. Medicine is so occupied with the emergencies that they don't know how to go upstream and find out who's falling in. And if they do go upstream to try to find out who's falling in they don't have the methods for dealing with that because the whole system is geared to an emergency. And when people are just falling in they're not in an emergency. We are – and when I say we I mean the attention industry – we're psychiatrists, psychologists, yoga teachers, aerobic teachers, Pilates teachers, massage therapists, **Chi Gung**, you name it, this whole thing is how to pay attention to yourself or somebody else paying attention to you, in any case attention is being paid.

And the medical system *does not have time* to pay that attention. And by God, if I bust my jugular vein I'm not going to my acupuncturist. I want that medical system there to deal with emergencies when emergencies come up. The trouble is when they try to apply that emergency mentality to the non-emergency child or the subacute condition.

We are brilliantly trained and equipped to deal with the subacute. Better than most medical people. They are not designed to do that. And we are in the process of going upstream and finding out why people are falling in...and it's because of stress and bad diet and bad body use patterns and the kind of cultural things that we've been talking about for the last hour.

But we're not all the way upstream yet. Most of the people that we're working with at somewhere between 23 and 30 years old are full of tension, full of bad use patterns, even those people who come from an economically advantaged...and most of the people who come to see us, let's face it, are economically advantaged or they wouldn't have \$50 to spend on a massage...so if the advantaged people are using only 10% of themselves or are operating at 10% efficiency, then that says something about how we educate folks in this society. So we have to go even further upstream and find out why all of *our* clients are falling into the patterns of tension, bad body use and stuff like that.

So one of the places that...I think there are a number of ways in which we can go after this...society's relationship to sexuality, to intimacy, has a real love/hate relationship with intimacy, they talk about sexual intimacy a lot, put it up on the movies but real intimacy is hard to come by...

and I think the kids are doing much better with this...with the intimacy issues and the caretaking...that these kids with things through their lips and eyebrows and stuff like that, if you get down with them and sit with them they may not know much about what's going on in the world but they really do know what's going on with the person sitting next to them in a way that even my hippie generation didn't really...we mouthed it but we didn't really live it. They're really living it. And I respect that about the younger generation.

With our nuclear families and with the way things go nowadays a lot of women..and men and husbands and fathers...go into parenthood without any idea of how to work with children. when I was in Bali and India...when I was Bali I was there with our 9-month-old child, I would hand that child to any 3 or 4 year old confident that that 3 or 4 year old would know how to handle an infant because they've been handling infants from the time that they could stand up because infants never touch the ground there, so they're passed from ama to grandmama to the older sister to whoever so that mother can get the cooking done.

So everybody can handle an infant and play with them. Here I was, I realized when my wife was pregnant with our daughter, that here I was bodyworker, well thought of and when we got to these childbirth classes somebody would hand me a baby and I would go, "Oh how cute" and look for the closest woman to hand it off to because as a man I had no training in handling babies, whatsoever. I had no idea what was coming at me.

And I was very fortunate to run into some people who taught me about developmental movement. And I've combined that with **Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's** body-mind centering developmental ideas, Feldenkrais's developmental ideas, some of the stuff from martial arts, aikido and things like that. And I really think that there is something to be taught to parents – fathers in particular who are just way out of touch with this – about how to handle children that would set up a nonverbal dialogue between parent and child which forms the basis of the verbal relationship that they're going to have for the next 18 years.

And I think some of this doesn't really show up until teenager-ism and then you lose contact with your kids because you don't have that physical basis underlying the verbal basis. When they begin to show independence it goes all wonky. And I would love to see this coming but I don't get the chance to teach it very often.

K: Is that somatic education?

T: Yeah it's somatic education. And I think all of the massage and bodywork stuff that we're doing now is research for somatic education of the future.

K: The metaphor of going upstream and finding out more...you were talking about the fact that we need to go upstream...it's almost for us, we need to do more than just go upstream, we need to do time traveling. We need to be time travelers because we're actually going back into how the patterns were put there in the first place. When you get into a person enough you start to uncover things that were there...

T: The distinction I would make there is that we're not psychiatrists or psychologists...

K: I'm thinking of time traveling in terms of structure, not verbal, not emotional...

T: So instead of time travel, it's space travel! What I think what we're developing here is spatial medicine. The reason I was objecting to your time metaphor is that I think the psychologists and psychiatrists look at people as to where they got stuck in time. And that we bodyworkers look at people as to where they got stuck in space. Now, overlap? Sure. Because you get stuck in time and then you get stuck in space from that time and when you go in there and open up that spatial relationship, the where you got stuck in time comes back into that of course.

But, we don't really have a way of looking back in time, we have a way of looking at the current spatial relationships and saying, "hmmm, what's going on in those spatial relationships?" and when you start to move them, people see for themselves where they got stuck. And that opens up

to new movement again. And that opens up to movement not just at the level of how far can you pick up your shoulder, but how mature can you get?

Because these things where people get really struck can limit their growth toward maturity...what do they say, growing old is mandatory, growing up is optional or some phrase like that? These kinds of events stop people from growing up. You can't stop people from growing old but you sure as hell can stop people from growing up.

So I think spatial medicine is really really really interesting in this way because it can unstick people from those things and without reference to the story. You don't have to be a psychiatrist and go into the whole content of oh it's your mother, can you forgive your mother and all of that kind of thing, which I'm not putting down, it's very valuable work, it's just not what we're trained to do.

And bodyworkers who try to act as psychotherapists often get themselves into trouble and if you just say, no, I'm just looking at the spatial relationship and if people have emotionality that comes up out of that I consider myself to be a good neighbor, I sympathize, I am there present with them, but I do not try to go into the story and try to sort out the details of their story. If that's necessary there are very well trained people who can do that.

My area of expertise is to discover where in their body that they have held that and to bring that up in front of them, and often that does involve emotional opening, and sometimes people need to talk about it and understand it and sometimes understanding is the booby prize. It's just enough to go through it and you go through it and you just start to see people moving.

I can't tell you the number of times that I'm at a party or on the street and a spouse of one of my clients will say, "Oh you're the bodyworker? Well THANK YOU!" and shake your hand because the person has started to move in a way that they've been stuck that their spouse didn't know how to get them to move...so Kinesis, guided movement, is what kind of movement can you create with people.

And these very fundamental developmental movements: the movements of the eyes in relationship to the hand is the basis of reading and all kinds of coordination...the ability of the spine to rotate and connect with the eyes and the pelvis and thus with the legs, these are very very fundamental relationships that start in that first year of life. And then we stuff kids into clothes and diapers and car seats and drag them along through supermarkets, we don't allow these patterns to happen in a natural way.

Going back to the agricultural or industrial revolution, we have so changed the environment in which kids grow up that what you might call the "natural way" of moving into your body or having your movement body express itself don't happen so much any more. So we end up with people at 23 years old who are economically, educationally and financially advantaged and their bodies are a mess. That means we're teaching people far too much about the principal exports of Bolivia and not nearly enough about how the body works.

K: I think a lot of things we do in the name of keeping the body safe, keeping a child safe...it's true throughout history, the more genteel or "civilized" the individual becomes, the more rigorous the costuming, the more the naturalness of the body is suppressed. Especially in Western civilization I would guess that that's true.

T: Yep, but that's an idea of Juvenal in Rome. So it's not a new idea. Juvenal was a poet in Rome, and he had a phrase, "A healthy mind and a healthy body." And what he realized was that the sons of the noble people who did not exercise became corpulent in their mind as well as their body and that the body needed to be trained for the mind to be healthy.

That was true in Rome, which was divorced from "real life," real life down on the ground, and most of us in America are nobles in the sense that we have a life of economic advantage unheard of even by kings in the 16th century...kings lived in the cold, and had to hunt their own food... there weren't the economic advantages that are right here in this kitchen to the 16th or 17th century kings.

So a lot of us are living as kings now and in that sense we're divorced...my daughter thinks that chicken is something that comes on a styrofoam tray, she has no connection to actually chopping the head off and plucking and preparing that chicken as food. And I don't think we can go back there, we have too many people on the planet now, but we need to have an educational system that keeps people in contact with the real world and one of the most proximate tool from the real world is your body.

Without that operating in a sensible way, it's really hard to be healthy as an individual or to live in a healthy society.

K: one other question yet...and it might be a quick answer too...there was a time in our Anatomy Trains class that someone was referring to energy work as being somehow separate or distinguished from Roling or myofascial work and your reaction to that was really strong. You said, it's all energy work, there's no way to distinguish between something like Zero Balancing and Polarity and Structural Integration. I wanted to get a little bit more from you on that if I could.

T: The only thing that I would take issue with is I do think there's a way of distinguishing between Polarity work and Structural Integration...I wouldn't go as far as Deanne and say there's no distinction between modalities. I do think there is. I think the yoga therapy practitioner might be working with somebody, versus the NMT person is looking for trigger points versus the Polarity person who's reading something versus the craniosacral person who's reading the craniosacral pulse...at the very least there's a difference in intent, and differences in intent produce differences in result.

As I remember my reaction was strong because the person was making this strong distinction between energy work and Structural Integration and the overlap among these things is very wide. I don't think you can just smoosh them all into the same category because they really are...you can either be aware of the craniosacral pulse or not. There's a dividing line there.

But if you go into physics, it's very clear that physics has found nothing but energy. Every particle that we've found is bustable down into smaller particles whirling around, and the smaller particles whirling around create the impression of a large particle. But then you get down into those smaller particles and you break them apart and you find out that those are a series of ever smaller particles whirling around to create the impression of THAT particle.

So that this table is 99% space, and my hand is 99% space, and the only thing that prevents my hand from passing through this table is an energetic field. There isn't any substance that physics has actually found.

So when people try to get too practical on me, I try to tell them, well, you know there really isn't anything but energy. So we're all molding energy in one way or another. Now, the ways in which we come after that energy in the practical real world of everyday life are different. My hand fit into the glove of Structural Integration from the moment it went and I respect other forms of work and go see other practitioners for my own health and things like that.

However, I still, 25 years later, practice primarily Structural Integration and all these things that I learned go into this box (referring to head) and come out of my hands in this Structural Integration way. Very few people I know can take discipline after discipline after discipline and really make it into an eclectic practice. I do know people who have done that. I know a whole lot of other people who have turned themselves into dishwater rather than soup, by trying to combine a whole lot of things.

And it's easier to make dishwater than soup when you combine things, you have to be a chef to make a good soup.

K: It's that whole, "Let's take another workshop, let's add another modality" mindset...

T: Yes, and then your business card has to have an addendum on it, with all these things you've done, and I think any of these things require a minimum of five years. Acupuncture requires a minimum of five years, Structural Integration requires a minimum of five years...you don't have to train for five years but you have to be in practice. Why do you think they call it practice? It takes a few years of living within a system to actually occupy it and to own it as your own. Up until then, for the first five years of my practice, I was going home, opening up a can of Grandma Ida's soup, putting it on the stove, serving it up and saying "Isn't this good soup?" Then after five years I began to construct my own approach to the soup.

K: Thank you, thank you very very much.