ROSEN METHOD BODYWORK

Intimacy with Number One by Kerstin Zettmar

"This work is about transformation from the person we think we are to the person we really are. In the end we can't be anybody else."

Marion Rosen

Ah, relationship! They are such wonderful catalysts to bring to the surface anything uncooked that may lurk in one's soul. For many years I worked very hard at becoming enlightened. Eventually I got quite skilled at thinking positive thoughts, being all-accepting, ever-loving, and seeing a spiritual purpose in everything. This was true as long as I stayed out of intimate relationships. For some bizarre reason the men I crossed paths with always seemed to be taken, live on another continent, or have deep-seated fear of intimacy.

The men I did end up dancing a few rounds with would suddenly have the power to press all kinds of funny buttons in me. Pow! Out would come anger, fear, distrust, and a battery of other "unholy" emotions. How uncomfortable. I'd decided that they clearly didn't love me or they wouldn't do that to me, and out the door I'd go. I developed an appreciation for people who chose a monastic life-style.

Since I wasn't quite ready to take that leap, though, I chose various therapies instead. That helped to reassure me that I was a wonderful, open woman with all the tools for intimate relationship. Maybe I just hadn't met the right guy yet.

As life would have it, a number of years later I found myself at a workshop for something called the Rosen Method. It was advertised as a form of body work addressing emotional root causes of chronic muscular tension. Since I was now working as a loving, caring massage therapist, I thought I might learn something that would prove beneficial for my clients. Little did I know how entering this workshop would change my own life.

Rosen work is about finding out and accepting who you really are at the core of your being. It aims at creating a safe space for you to become intimate with your inner most self, the person you are when you stop pretending, performing, or pleas-

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ing. Marion Rosen, its founder says, “This work is about transformation from
the person we think we are to the per-
son we really are. In the end we can’t be
anybody else.” The key factor in this
method is touch—a gentle, intimate
kind of touch that clients at times claim
they’ve been missing since infancy. In
contacting the body in this way, the un-
conscious/forgotten feelings, memories,
and dreams that have been held in by
tight muscles and restricted breathing
are evoked. Often what we have tried to
conceal the most, even from ourselves,
shows up the clearest in the body. The
body doesn’t lie.

I can still hear my teacher’s voice as
she with warm hands gently probed the
tight muscles of my upper back in a
class demonstration: “The first few lay-
ers of Kerstin are quite relaxed. When I
stay on the surface with my hand like
this, I get the impression of someone
very open, trusting and receptive. I
don’t see a lot of breath in her back,
though, so that makes me want to ex-
plode deeper... and when I do, I find
some muscles working very hard, hold-
ing very tight. Right here, over her
heart, there is a big boulder that doesn’t
want to budge. Something is being very
well defended and protected here.”

And she was right. As she contacted
the big rock over my heart and just
stayed there with her hands, very pa-
tient, with unconditional presence, it
slowly started to melt. The melting was
coming from inside of me, just like the
tears that began to stream down my
cheeks. Eventually memories emerged,
shedding some light on why I at one
time, had felt the need to install this pro-
tective boulder—why it was so much
safer to fall in love with people I
couldn’t get very close to.

I feared that if anyone looked closer
for a long time I was under the im-
pression that so-called negative emo-
tions were causing tension in the body.
It came as real news to me that it actu-
ally is the trying to suppress unwanted
emotions that causes the muscle to
work over-time. I do believe there is some-
thing true about the notion that holding
onto anger, grief, fear, and hatred can
contribute to making a person sick. Yet
when we give ourselves permission to
fully feel our emotions through the
whole cycle of beginning, middle and
end, they usually don’t last very long.
It’s our trying to stop mid-stream that
keeps us stuck and unhappy in our un-
finished business. For some people
learning to trust the cycles of emotions
is a large part of this work.

These days I’ve given up on the idea
of becoming a perfectly enlightened be-
ing. In my dance of intimacy I still lose
my balance from time to time. The dif-
ference now is that I take those mo-
ments as a wake-up call to examine
what it is inside of me that might be
calling out to be healed. I’m really much
more interested in becoming whole than
holy.

Being fully alive doesn’t mean you
are in neutral or that you always are up.
In my experience it means that you have
all your emotions available to you but
that you are not enslaved by any par-
ticular one of them.

As a painter I sometimes think of it as
having a full palette to choose from with
all the colors of the rainbow. As a
weaver I know the importance of the
dark or the cool strands of yarn to set of
the light or fiery ones. We are all artists
in co-creating our lives. Creativity is our
natural inheritance. I’ve been fortunate
to watch many people wake up to their
creative potential as they have had cour-
age to be honest with themselves and go

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work over-time.

through the barriers down to their core.
And if we go deep enough we come to
the place where we are all one. What
could be more intimate than that?

Kerstin Zettmar, born and raised in Sweden,
now lives in Newport, Rhode Island where
she works as a licensed Massage Therapist,
Practitioner of the Rosen Method, and art-
ist. Introductory workshops are offered in
the Rosen Method—the next one will be
held!