

Creating a Safe Container for Rosen Trainings

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Introduction

Teaching Rosen Method involves a lot more than teaching skills; it requires guiding students through a transformational process which requires them to let go of much of their cultural conditioning as well as their personal barriers and patterns. A teacher is a trainer and not the student's psychotherapist or Rosen practitioner, but the teacher must maintain a supportive connection with each student who enters this journey of bringing forth the truth of who they are. For this to happen, students and teachers alike need to have a safe container.

Since I became a Senior Teacher, both students and guest teachers have given me so much positive feedback about the safety experienced in our intensives that I wondered what goes into creating it. When I was a student and a teacher-in-training, I often felt overwhelmed and dissociated. I blamed myself for being scared to try new skills in front of a group, for not being embodied enough, etc. In retrospect, I realize that I was often not present because the safe container did not exist. That was one primary motivation for me to study what did make a safe container. I asked my students and staff, and I thought about my own experiences.

This article reflects what students and colleagues told me, plus my own observations and opinions, and will hopefully open a discussion for the whole Rosen Method community.

Before the Training Begins

Screening Students

Teachers begin to create safety even before the intensive starts by the process of screening students to see if they are appropriate for a group experience. The registration form asks questions that allow us to learn something about their medical/psychotherapeutic experience. We know that they've had some experience with private sessions and an introductory workshop, so (with permission from the student) we can consult with their practitioners and previous teachers about their readiness for this experience.

We would of course exclude anyone who does not meet the criteria for receiving Rosen work according to our Scope of Practice established by the Rosen Institute. But additionally, I have had very appropriate clients who were not ready for a group experience. Some people have been deeply hurt by

groups and may or may not be ready for an experience with one. Some people need to keep building the foundation of their private work so that exposure to a group will not be too overwhelming.

People who are not ready may act out, withdraw, or take up an inordinate amount of time and attention. A training will go best when we are reasonably certain that each student knows what to expect and has agreed to engage with the challenges of doing their personal growth work in the context of a group vs. in a private session.

Creating the Physical Container

Even before the students arrive, teachers are responsible for creating the right kind of physical container. We have to find a suitable space, spacious enough for all our activities. I prefer having windows onto a natural setting. It's easier to relax when the floors and bathrooms are clean, the furniture is solid, and the lighting and the temperature can be regulated. Most of our intensives have been held as residential retreats. The quality of the meals makes a huge difference in the students' experience. We work with the chefs to make sure everyone's food allergies and preferences are considered, and sometimes we have to educate the cooks as to what we believe constitutes healthy food.

Consider someone's experience as they enter a room. Is it set up so that a student will know immediately what is about to happen? For instance, are the chairs in a neat circle or the room emptied for movement? Is there a board up announcing the day's schedule? Is there a central focus: a small table at the center of the circle with significant objects? I usually have flowers and a "talking stone," with enough tissues at hand. Borrowing the idea of a "talking stick" from Native American traditions, the person holding the object (ours is actually a glass heart) has the floor without interruption. These may seem like obvious details, yet the sense of beauty and order created in a room contributes to our ability to open up.

As the teacher, my responsibility for the space continues throughout the week. People are necessarily deeply involved in their own process. I'm the one who has the overall picture of what the group needs at any given moment. So, if we're entering an introspective activity and people come in from a break chattering and small-talking, I have to ask them to change the tone, the atmosphere in the room. If clients on the table get too loud during practicum, I have to help them contain their process so that it doesn't intrude into the rest of the room. I monitor how people are being in and with themselves, so the group doesn't get scattered or lose focus.

Before becoming a teacher, I hadn't really given these details much thought. I learned many of them from a teacher who modeled taking extreme care with the space, down to what kind of music she wanted playing each morning before people even came in. After being in training with her for awhile, I once asked her, "What are you doing that I'm not seeing?" I had the feeling that something was happening beyond learning specific leadership skills. She replied, "I'm making sure there are no energy leaks."

That was a language I couldn't relate to at the time. I don't see energy, and I don't see it leaking. However, I do know when the atmosphere is interrupted or corrupted, when deepening is dissipated because of chatter or lateness or too much attention to objects (like notebooks and pens). My signal that there has been an "energy leak" is that I get irritated and I want to protect the group against someone's behavior. Later in the article, I'll talk about how I handle my own irritation.

Unless you have been responsible for how things go in a group for a whole week, you have no idea how important these details are. They are the ground you stand on, and if you don't pay attention to them, you'll wonder why things aren't going smoothly or why it feels so hard to lead.

Creating the Circle

Let's set the scene: Students have walked in to a beautiful environment which already tells them what to expect, that is, sitting in a circle, or doing movement, or perhaps a creative project. The schedule of the day is up, including breaks and meal times. They found you waiting for them and have received a positive welcome. But they're still thinking and feeling all kinds of troublesome things: *Do I belong here? Will I be liked and accepted? What happens if it gets too hard for me? Can these people handle my stuff? Oh, they'll never like me if they knew the truth...*

The essence of these questions is: will this be a safe container for me? So the first three things we do is to begin to answer that question and set the tone for the rest of the week.

First, a quick go-around of sharing your name, where you're from, and perhaps what your experience in Rosen is. I often add a simple question, so we can get an insight into their lives, like "What is something you've accomplished that you're proud of?" This at least gets everyone to have their voice heard, to put themselves into the room. Before this, they were scattered individuals; now they are a circle of fellow-travelers.

Second, I invite the group to hold hands, and I formally create the circle. This is when I first demonstrate something I'll repeat throughout the article, in different contexts: BE TRANSPARENT. Right now, this means acknowledging what it took for folks to get here and what they may be feeling. Transparency now means that you normalize their doubts and fears and excitement and say specifically that we're about to do something that will address those things. We are coming together to create a safe enough space that will provide enough support that people can explore themselves deeply, delve into unknown internal places, and process their barriers to their authentic selves. Doing this requires courage, truthfulness, and especially each other's acceptance and support.

I make it clear that each person in the circle is a brick in the wall of shelter that we're building, that we are incomplete without each one, that their presence matters. I tell them that they are crucial to making the safe container, and the more real and honest they are, the stronger the container gets. I tell them that they will be offered support without judgment, and if they judge others, they don't have to judge their judging. This usually gets a laugh of recognition, but I think that's one thing they're afraid of: that they won't be able to be nonjudgmental.

I end with being explicit that we are doing "soul work" here, and that the container has to be a sacred space. We acknowledge this deeper dimension that we are entering together. We're not just learning bodywork or doing emotional healing or fun movement; we're regaining our whole selves. I can always feel a change in the atmosphere of the room when I include this part of creating a circle. It's a relief to people. It puts more ground under their feet. I can feel things deepen already. We end this ritual with letting go of hands.

Then, we discuss the agreements we make to create a safe container. They are all about creating and maintaining the right boundaries. These agreements include confidentiality, timeliness, and bringing issues into the circle. We also have people pair up with a “buddy;” these pairs will be there as a resource for each other and keep track of each other’s whereabouts.

Teaching Concretely

For some people new to Rosen Method, sessions look like “magic” because they don’t know the simple components of what makes a Rosen session happen. It’s very scary to be thrown into this mysterious ocean of a process without knowing how to swim. And what you think you know already, you probably have to unlearn. The sooner Rosen Method is presented as a set of specific skills integrated into an unfolding process, the less anxious students will be.

Learning Rosen Method is necessarily experiential. However, if it doesn’t include actual information, it can be a frustrating process. I speak from my own experience here. I came into Rosen Method training pretty much disembodied, so I must admit I still don’t know if my teachers never explicitly taught me how to touch, or if I was unable to hear it. I certainly never got handouts like those I now provide, which delineate the various ways to touch and their purposes. It would have been easier if someone had told me what to do with my hands rather than what not to do. The same applies to learning how to use words. It’s okay to explain why certain ways of speaking to clients (such as asking questions that begin with “why”) do not deepen the process, but why not practice different ways of speaking so students can witness how they work? For example, to have a verbal dyad where the practitioner’s only response is “I’m right here,” and see what happens. Teach students how to reflect without parroting, how to formulate a question, etc.

As for what we’re tracking, that too has to be made as palpable, observable and specific as possible, rather than relying on shorthand jargon that does not have real meaning to students, such as “presence,” “showing up,” “come into your body.” What are the physical signals of response in the body? Granted, noticing some of them is a skill that can be developed, but it sure helps if someone shows you what a muscle in the process of relaxing feels like, or how important even the slightest shift in breath is. Even the more abstract elements of Rosen can be described concretely, such as whether you feel connection or not. To a Rosen practitioner, connection means more than simply touching or talking. We have to feel that our contact is eliciting a response, that we are in communication with the client’s inner being. We need to teach our students how we know if this is happening or not. To get a better sense of what this kind of attunement is and why it’s so important, see the article by Ivy Green entitled “The Safe Container of Interpersonal Relationships” in the Spring 2014 issue of the *Rosen Method International Journal*, Volume 7, Issue 1.

Part of the safe container is concrete information and guidelines. That’s why we have delineated exactly what skills we expect students to have at each track of the training, and we discuss this with them along the way. These skills are so contrary to what’s normal in the world that students may not believe that they’re not there to manipulate anything, or that simple reflection is often enough, or that they can trust themselves when they don’t have an agenda.

Most of the skills themselves are simple; the tremendous challenge is to become a person who can learn and implement them.

Education Based on Rosen Method Principles

Rosen Method Bodywork practitioners offer non-judgmental presence to their clients and guide them to deeper connection with themselves. We do not manipulate, criticize or abandon them. Trainings would be safer if teachers applied the same principles to teaching as they do to offering private sessions:

- Don't judge.
- Connect, love and support.
- Slow down; get curious; don't skip over what is arising to move ahead.
- Collaborate.
- Course-correct; if something isn't working, try something else.
- Trust the process.
- Track yourself.
- Approach each client/student as a unique individual instead of imposing a Method on them.

Every instance of dysfunctional teaching I have experienced or witnessed stemmed from not applying these basic expectations of RMB to the training situation. (Also, I might add, from not understanding the effects of trauma and how to work with it.) Each instance eroded the safety of the container.

What is Safety?

Being safe and feeling safe are not necessarily the same thing. Being safe means that the people around you are not going to attack, undermine or abandon you but are able to support you through whatever you are facing. If a breach in safe connection happens, it can be repaired. This is the kind of container Rosen Method teachers intend to create, but it's actually a rare experience in most of our educational backgrounds or even in our experiences with family. Therefore, it takes awhile for Rosen students to experience being safe before they can recognize that it exists. Trust has to develop through experiences, so teachers don't need to get defensive if students don't trust them right away. Welcome the process of demonstrating to students that you can hear them and be with them.

People sometimes feel (or act) safe when they are not. I think this comes from years of having to live in an unsafe world and pretend that it's okay, that you can handle it. People ignore boundary violations or expose their feelings in situations where they are not likely to be well received. With clients and students, I watch out for when they are taking on too much too fast, when they are trying to suppress fear to move ahead. It's an amazing experience to be allowed to feel how unsafe you actually feel; that alone lays the groundwork for safety.

The ultimate safety is embodiment. It means that you are so grounded in yourself that you no longer experience fear in situations that might have scared you before. As one colleague so beautifully put it, "I'm safe because I'm me."

Dealing with Perfectionism and Authoritarianism

Breaches in safety happen when past conditioning overcomes our RMB principles. Not just in education, but throughout our culture, we run into these two tendencies: perfectionism and authoritarianism. They go hand in hand, and they don't create a good learning environment.

I'm constantly amazed that students come in expecting themselves to know things they can't possibly know yet. They get embarrassed if they don't understand how to practice Rosen; they dare not try things for fear of making a mistake or being inappropriate. They expect themselves to be perfect. If they expect perfection from the teacher, and if the teacher expects it of himself or herself, then everyone is in trouble.

Early on in any training, I make it clear that I expect that I will make mistakes and will, with people's help, correct them. Now I can relax, because I don't have to be perfect and I don't have to be alone with the responsibility of making sure that I'm not missing something. Mistakes are inevitable in an experiential learning process, and what we should do with mistakes is notice our experience, tell the truth, and make connection. We need to stay connected to ourselves, to hearing each other's experiences and feelings, and to finding what is true in the present moment. We may need to explore what in our personal histories have led us to this mistake.

This is the same attitude we strive to have as practitioners. We don't know what will happen, or that we will respond in the most optimal way at every moment. If we get off track, our task is to get back on, in collaboration with the client. Just as a Rosen session is a collaboration, so should the training be. That means both the practitioner/teacher and the client/student are responsible and do not relinquish their authority. And everyone can relax because no one is expected to be perfect.

I've heard leaders say that a leader must never, ever admit to making a mistake or they will lose authority. That kind of authority seems arbitrary to me. My authority comes from claiming my own competence, from practicing what I preach, and from my own vulnerability. I know vulnerability sounds like a weakness, but it is, in fact, having full possession of yourself. When I'm vulnerable, I'm allowed to be a human being and not some robotic role. I don't give away my power; instead, I share my actual experience. I expect respect because I offer respect to anyone who is courageous enough to share what is true for them.

There's a weird thing in our culture around authority figures. They're supposed to be omniscient, and when they're not, we get mad at them or withdraw. Also, when teachers have supposedly achieved their status because they're perfect, then everyone else is deficient somehow. This approach is not helpful at all. If I as a teacher embody my full authority, I don't have to worry about someone taking it away from me. If others embody theirs, they are helping me take responsibility for how things go. We operate on mutual respect and trust.

In our hierarchical culture, we're used to the equation that if one person has power, the others don't. I've been in situations where leaders are afraid to let others shine. That is not a safe container for anybody. In my teaching experience, I notice how I feel when people are claiming their power and when they are not. This includes fellow teachers, teachers in training, assistants, and students. When another person steps into her or his full presence, uses her voice loudly and clearly, and claims her authority, I feel safer. I'm not surrounded by people who hesitate to show up. I'm not left trying to carry everything myself. What a relief

to have a lot of strong people in the room! And what is more, these people are leading the way for others to come forth and claim themselves.

Dealing with Fallout of Past Educational Experiences

We are conditioned to believe that there is a right answer, and if you don't know it, you're stupid. Now, I believe there are many right ways to conduct a session and some very wrong ways, but beginning students expect to learn a protocol. We have to teach them that Rosen sessions are about tracking the client and responding in the way that is needed in that particular moment. I've seen students confused about seeing one demonstration with a certain approach to touch, and the next one is different. Do different practitioners do it differently? What's the "right way"? They have to learn that how light or deep, how long, how much movement or stillness, where—all that depends on what is going on just then. The only universal "right way" to touch, for instance, is with awareness.

The same is true for use of words. This is often one of the greatest stumbling blocks to becoming a practitioner. Students don't believe how powerful simple reflection and mirroring is, until they experience doing it authentically instead of by parroting. They don't allow themselves the simple curiosity that is at the heart of the process; they think they have to know what's happening and where it's going at every moment. Sometimes student practitioners grope for the right words, just like their clients, to describe some felt experience. But they feel that, because they are the professional, they are not allowed to not know; they're supposed to know exactly the right thing to say at all times. What a relief to be told that they can get their client's help in groping for the right words. Collaboration actually works better.

All of this discomfort with the unknown and unpredictable stems from a previous educational experience of being taught the rules and being judged and evaluated on knowing the right content. Students are scared of not knowing, making mistakes and being real because they expect criticism; they expect to be made to feel like failures.

They need something beyond mere information to get where they need to be to become practitioners. If the information isn't getting through, they need to explore what is getting them stuck. No doubt what gets in their way is some deep hurt or shame, maybe even one they've never identified. Of course, if they are going to bring this forth, they need to be safe from blame, judgment or criticism. They need the teacher's open curiosity instead.

Being Transparent

Nothing makes a training safer than transparency. Transparency is saying out loud what is actually going on, which is a key quality of Rosen Method. We all know that making something explicit can bring a freeing breath. This is what we mean by bringing the unconscious to consciousness; it helps us relax. It's the same when leading a group. You don't have to pretend anything; if you're teaching and you're in some kind inner turmoil, best to say it out loud.

I remember the first time I ever gave a demonstration. I had been a practitioner for years but had not attended an intensive for quite awhile and was being checked out for acceptance into teacher training.

The demo mostly went well, but there were a few moments of total silence during it. Moments during which I had no idea what I was doing and trying to act cool. Afterward, one of the students asked what was going on during that silence. I replied, "I got so scared that I went totally blank."

"Oh, not deep, meaningful process!"

"Nope. Just terror."

We all laughed. Later I received a comment from one of the new students, a Hispanic woman who had felt like an outsider among us. She said what a relief that was, to see that no pretense was necessary. She felt safer.

I felt safer too. I've carried on with the belief that it's better to be transparent, and it was reinforced for me this summer when I was teaching in Denmark, my first time out of my own school. One morning, something was obviously interfering with my presence, since I had been losing things, going blank in the middle of saying something, etc. So, there I was about to give a demonstration and feeling lost. I said out loud, "I don't know what's going on, but I am off my game right now. Let me see if I can get grounded just by touching her. Let's see what happens." I didn't have to hide my discomfort and act as if I'm fine, and I got to demonstrate that practitioners don't have to be flawless. It all went great after that.

Transparency also means that teachers explain why they are doing what they're doing. That's not just during a demonstration, but throughout the day. What is our intention in setting up the schedule as we have? Why do we teachers eat our meals separately? How do we talk about the students? Why did we respond to a question this way and not that way? What are we feeling when we don't know what to do? How do we proceed?

Handling Negative Feedback

Transparency, rather than defensiveness, is the best way for a teacher to handle negative feedback from a student. Such feedback can happen for two possible reasons: the student picked up that something was not quite right, or the student is projecting something onto the teacher. It takes transparency to find out which it is.

One example of a mistake a teacher made happened during a discussion of some Rosen Method theory. Toward the end, a student asked a question and got a response. But she asked it again, with a bit of agitation. Again, her question was answered but she was still upset. Finally, another student spoke up for her and said, "She is clearly having feelings about this." That's when the teacher woke up to the fact that the student needed a *process response*, not an informational one. She admitted her mistake, did the right thing, and thanked the student who had pointed out her error for making it a safer container. What a relief to all of us! Teachers aren't perfect, but we get help.

Another time, I was accused of ignoring a student on the first evening before a residential intensive. When I said I had never intended to, he said something like, "They talk nice, but they stab you in the back." That made it clear to me that he was projecting some past experience onto me. But why would he think I ignored him? As I recalled the evening, I remembered a brief moment when this student, whom I had never met before, walked into the dining room right past me and I did not reach out because I thought he was

one of the retreat center staff on a mission. So, I told him I remembered that moment, and just hearing me confirm that I did indeed ignore him for a moment allowed him to drop the whole concern. Even if he was projecting, he had experienced something that looked enough like what had hurt him in the past.

Negative feedback is not the same thing as attack, and it does not require the teacher to defend or withdraw. It means something happened the teacher missed, and/or the student is projecting. Our task is to apply the Rosen Method value of getting curious to find out the sources of the problem, in each person and in the incident. This can be done with respect for everyone involved.

Although we are required to be non-judgmental, we do need to evaluate student progress and give helpful corrective feedback. It's likely that students come in dreading this and won't learn to expect such feedback to be loving and supportive until they experience it that way. Teachers have to deal with students' projections of past teachers' experiences, especially during supervisions. I once became the supervisor of a student whose past supervisions had mostly ended with her in tears. I told her, "My goal is to have you feel seen and loved as you learn." She relaxed.

When giving feedback, it helps to begin with what they are doing right, then offering information or suggestions. However, I have found that the best way to "teach" is to bring the student back to connection with herself. When she gets out of the pattern of trying to think up the right answer and consults her own presence, she will often know exactly how to proceed.

Trusting the Process

It took me years as a practitioner to fully trust the process. That means trust that each moment I am entering something new and unknown; I don't have to know what to do about it. Rather, I can track, name and leave it to the client's body or body/mind to provide what's next in the healing process. A teacher has to hold similar awareness for a roomful of people. Just as you don't judge or exclude any aspect of the client's experience, you don't exclude anything from the circle—not anger, not despair, not conflict. Trust that when the whole truth comes out, we'll work it out. Trust confusion, unclarity, unknown, silence, or blankness, and give them time and attention. Something will appear that needed to be known, that sets the whole situation onto a different course.

I remember one time during an intensive when a teacher said something that was a deep truth for her, but it triggered just about everyone in the room. Feelings and conflict erupted. We welcomed it all until we realized it was getting heated enough that perhaps we should take a break. So, we did, but we returned in ten minutes to keep sticking together, allowing all reactions to come out. Everyone was heard. No one was made wrong. The end result was that each person felt they could be heard and own their own thoughts and feelings.

I confess, there were moments during that incident that I feared "loss of control," whatever that is. I feared that students would get overwhelmed or alienated; I feared I was wrong. But I stuck to my deep belief that if all of the truth is heard, we end up in the right place. That's the process, and if I believe in it as a practitioner, so much more do I need to believe it as a teacher.

The Inevitability of “The Shadow”

A teacher needs to be self-aware and able to track herself and take care of herself. But of course, no one is fully conscious, and no teacher willingly and knowingly creates unsafety; it's what she does that is unconsciously motivated. We call this “the shadow,” from the Jungian term for what we have put away from consciousness, and it includes all the hurtful behaviors that we are blind to (and even the useful behaviors we don't know we're doing).

I worried about what I would do as a teacher unintentionally and unaware. How can one know what one doesn't know? Again, I solicited the support of my staff and students. I told them of this concern and invited them to please let me know when something was off. I have been so grateful for their insights and interventions.

My first clue of my own unconscious behavior was that I would sometimes get really irritated with my students. (This would come out in curt tones of voice with inherent judgment or rejection.) When I slowed down to examine why, I realized that it was my signal from my body that something off-track was going on and I needed to intervene. I needed to slow everything in the room down and look at who is feeling what and what do they need. Transparency was my best friend here.

I made an announcement to the group: if you notice I'm getting short with you or irritated, please tell me because we need to pay attention. I said that my unhelpful behavior would not come from my conscious awareness, and that I would need help to identify it. This fostered mutual trust. To my surprise, I rarely get irritated any more.

Another thing I've “done wrong” and will probably do again is not notice everything that's going on in the room. I may be so focused on one or two people that I miss someone else having a hard time. That's why I make it very explicit that I expect that everyone takes responsibility to speak up for themselves and for each other.

Clarity is essential, and sometimes I don't even realize that it's possible for students to interpret something I say in a totally different way than I meant. This won't come out until we hit some snag in the progress of the training. I have to stay open to the fact that what I assume may not be what others assume. I have to be as explicit and clear as I can.

Students Speak

I did an informal survey of my students to help me open my eyes to what was going on at our intensives that puzzled me. Why did they feel so safe? Why did teaching feel so easy and relaxed to me? If we could become aware of what was going right, then we could be sure to reproduce it.

First, I was surprised at how many of them mentioned the importance of putting our trainings in the context of something larger. That ritual of creating the circle at the beginning was essential. One man wrote, when asked what constitutes a safe container, “A recognition of the ineffable that creates and holds space for all that is. Truly. This trumps it all for me, because this is the ultimate safety. Recognizing it, consistently-towards-permanently, aligns my consciousness with the actual container.” One way or another, acknowledging that we are doing soul work makes it safer. Another student emphasized the “Observation

of the Sacredness- When the circle is first built, the gentle rules have been recited, and everyone takes their place. There is this moment of privilege knowing you are a part of something really important. Reverence for the processes of all and a willingness to hold that space and keep it safe."

They also emphasized the importance of having teachers who know themselves, share themselves, and participate in further self-development. Here is more from a student's list of what makes for safety:

- Guides who know themselves and are fiercely and humbly committed to self-discovery.
- Guide involvement (work/check-ins) with individual participants outside of group time to keep finger on pulse.
- Individuals with high/matched level of commitment.
- Trust-building and vulnerability exhibited by each person at their level.
- Attending to and expressing level of connectedness in the group.
- Allowing, encouraging, and accepting each person's true expression moment to moment.

The fact that the staff models sharing of their authentic selves (without launching into deep process) invites students to do the same. And the more fellow-students share, the safer it gets.

Another student shared that safety came from "your emphasizing your intent and modeling it in sharing your authentic self. How a participant is received by the teachers/assistants when they share their truth, with loving attentive listening. When concerns relative to the intensive are shared they are spoken from the individual's experience; I never recall the words or energy of blame. The teachers/assistants, as well as participants allowing themselves to be vulnerable in their sharing models it and seems to invite others to do the same."

When students are invited to be part of creating the safe container, they invest more in it. "A container is built one truthful brick at a time and everybody has to add a brick and gently hold the brick that was given." They feel safer when everyone participates.

In comparison with other trainings, some of my students have noticed that elsewhere, ground rules for safety may not be established before things proceed. There may be no intentional creation of a container (or even introductions) before they are invited to share deep material with total strangers. In addition, "The fact that we do Rosen Movement and receive touch daily to help ground us is sure different than any other event/training I have attended." So, touch and movement themselves are part of creating the safe container.

It's safer when students know that someone is in charge. As one said, "If you say something is going to happen, I know it's going to happen." There is consistency and follow-through. When the need for flexibility arises, we are transparent about what we are changing and why.

An assistant recently said to me, "You are not a 'Teacher;' you are Rosen." I pondered what that could mean and concluded that I have internalized the principles of Rosen Method enough that I truly do trust the process. I know that if I stay in connection with myself and others, what is required in each moment will appear. I'm also confident that if breaches in connection happen, they can be repaired, given time and curiosity. I believe in the skills we teach—they work!

Conclusion

Teachers can create a safe container for learning through proper screening of students, arranging the physical space, and being explicit about what we are here to do together and why it requires certain agreements. Teachers need to be clear, articulate and concrete about what they are teaching so Rosen Method moves from the mysterious or magical realm in students' minds to the very concrete and learnable.

Rosen Method trainings should feel like Rosen Method sessions in that students need to experience them as a safe container in which they will be challenged but not judged, criticized or abandoned. They need to feel free to explore the unknown, try (and fail at) new skills, and be received with compassion and openness. The key to providing safety is transparency, which is nothing more than being with what is, without judgment but with curiosity. This allows the welcoming of everybody's "mistakes," including teachers. It frees everyone from perfectionism, authoritarianism and defensiveness. A teacher embodies the same values and characteristics as a practitioner, and additionally is able to track and manage a roomful of people, all with equanimity.