

Reviews

Required Reading

Body Psychotherapy: History, Concepts, and Methods by Michael C. Heller (W.W. Norton & Co. 2012)

**Review by Michael Salvesson,
Advanced Rolwing® Instructor**

Michael Heller's book is, as Dr. Peter Levine states on the book's cover: "Unquestionably the bible of body-oriented psychotherapy." But it is also, for bodyworkers and Rolfers™ in particular, a much needed course in the history of the mind-body problem, an exploration of the emergence of a modern, scientific view of the organism, a detailed look at the interaction between psychoanalysis and early European body therapists, an analysis of the influence of non-conscious mechanisms in the regulation of the body and psyche, and the presentation of a model for situating various body and psychotherapeutic practices within a coherent view of the organism. That is a lot to offer between the covers of a single book but nowhere else will one find such an essential education for bodyworkers.

Michael Heller begins his book with a review of the two ancient systems of body wisdom that encompass the totality of the organism: the yoga of India and the Taoist practices of China. In these disciplines foundational links between mind and body are unified in ancient metaphysical systems, which have recently been imported to the West and influence the thinking and practice of many bodyworkers.

The course of Western thinking has broken apart this unified view of nature and the body, and the next section of Heller's book takes us on a tour of Western conceptions of what becomes the mind-body duality, or the mind-body problem. Heller starts with the idealism of Plato. He cautions us against the dangers of certainty inherent in any stance of absolute knowledge, a theme he will take up later, as a plea to accommodate the insights of bodily and clinical experience to the methods of modern science.

From Plato, Heller takes us to Descartes and then to Spinoza (Heller's favorite), where we are introduced to the modern notion of complex organisms capable of self-organizing and a view of nature that is not dependent on any transcendent source

of order. It is here we find one of the first discussions of the influence of the body on the mind: "The human mind is capable of perceiving a great many things, and is the more capable, the more its body can be disposed in a great many ways." (Spinoza, *Ethics*, quoted in Heller pg. 125).

Heller prods us throughout his book to see the complexity in the organism and to resist simplistic views of the body. In his section on "The Organism of the Biologists," he reviews the work of Lamarck, Wallace, and Darwin, commenting on the evolutionary necessity of a body that is the result of an accretion of accidental accommodations to a constantly changing environment. The very interesting interplay between a messy, accidental process of forming organisms and the need for coherence within organisms and species is dramatized in the debates among the evolutionary biologists.

From the early biologists come our modern notions of the internal milieu of Claude Bernard and Cannon's notions of homeostasis, essential ideas in the understanding of psychophysiology and Selye's stress response. Heller leads from the early work in homeostasis to more modern theories of the origin of emotion and the relationship between affects, neurohormonal regulatory systems, and behavior.

In part IV Heller critiques the theories "based on the assumption that there exists a linear and direct connection between psychological and bodily dynamics." After dispatching "linear models of emotional expression," he introduces the early practitioners of body-based therapies or what the European schools called Gymnastics. Most modern bodywork schools, including Rolwing Structural Integration (SI), trace their origins to these pioneers. It is the interaction of many of these practitioners of bodywork with the early psychoanalysts that gives rise to our modern notions of psycho-physical integration.

Heller's discussions of the topographies of Freud, the "first attempts to include considerations of the body into psychoanalytical treatments," and the work of Adler, Spielrein, Groddeck, and Fenichel is compelling reading for anyone working with bodies. Reich looms large and Heller treats him with respect and a critical approach to his lapses into idealism.

Heller has spent significant time studying with Dr. Paul Ekman and the section on

non-verbal communication research and psychotherapy reflects his familiarity with the research in this area. One of the most interesting aspects of this discussion is his treatment of the research on the mother-infant dyad and how one's self-regulation is learned from the style of self-regulation of an emotionally important other in early childhood.

Finally, I believe Heller's formulation of a model for understanding the interactions of aspects of organismic functioning (his dimensions of the organism model) provides a useful tool for practitioners and researchers. His plea that all clinical practitioners of body psychotherapy (and from my perspective, all bodyworkers) adopt a view of their work that is consistent with contemporary scientific knowledge is outlined in the introduction as "The Epistemological and Ethical Framework of Psychotherapeutic Knowledge." As he says later in the book: "I have noticed that, trained in the necessary restricted perspective of one school, practitioners often lack the necessary general culture to recognize that their knowledge has been polished for thousands of years in numerous cultures. In spite of the variety of elaborated approaches, most of them rediscover a certain number of robust practices and concepts that are sadly often drowned in a bizarre conceptualization. This textbook has been written so that in the future body psychotherapists [bodyworkers], will be able to face these issues with more confidence."

The Gestalt of Stretching

Fascial Stretch Therapy by Ann Frederick and Chris Frederick (Handspring Publishing 2014)

Stretch to Win by Ann Frederick and Chris Frederick (Human Kinetics 2006)

**Reviews by Szaja Charles Gottlieb,
Certified Advanced Rolfer™**

As fascia research transforms the somatic landscape, traditional manual therapy practices such as stretching are being reconsidered in the light of new discoveries. *Fascial Stretch Therapy*, co-authored by kinesiologist Ann Frederick and her husband physical therapist Chris Frederick is such a reevaluation. Fascial Stretch Therapy™ (FST) began in the mid 1990s and evolved through the crucible of Kinesis Myofascial Integration (KMI), of

which both authors are graduates, and the transforming research emanating from the Fascia Research Congresses, which they attended. The result is a mature, fully developed modality firmly based on scientific research and a manual therapy protocol that is rigorous yet based on the global structural integration (SI) model of fascial chains developed by Tom Myers. The authors' target audience is broad, manual therapists, and their book is nothing less than an attempt to reorient the manual therapy world to their new model of stretching based on the primacy of fascia.

The Fredericks' effort to project new and innovative concepts and practices into the mainstream therapeutic community, possibly hostile territory, demands precision and scientific rigor, a lack of which sometimes plagues publications within our own community. Not so *Fascial Stretch Therapy*! The Fredericks write clinically, and with purpose and organization, all heavily referenced. *Fascial Stretch Therapy* is, in fact, the basic manual for FST certification, offered with their courses at their website www.stretchtowin.com. This is not a book for the faint-hearted; it will require a concerted effort. But whether, after reading this book, you ultimately decide to obtain an FST certification or not, the book can serve several important purposes for an SI practitioner. First, FST stretching techniques fit hand and glove with SI and can be adapted into SI sessions, whether Ten Series or fix-it work. Second, the book offers many unique and stimulating ideas such as the StretchWave™, a synchronization of breath between client and practitioner, and the concept of prestress, the level of tension in a body when at rest or before movement. Lastly, the authors present a useful survey of current fascia research in regards to manual therapy.

Fascial Stretch Therapy is only 200 pages. The first eighty pages, copiously footnoted, present a theoretical grounding for FST based on recent fascia research and its implications for manual therapy practices. The remaining 120 pages are a visual catalogue of assisted stretching techniques developed by the Fredericks in their practice in Arizona, divided into lower and then upper body sections. The book begins with an in-depth review of the scientific literature of stretching, once a sacred cow in the manual therapy field, but lately mired in controversy concerning its benefits in terms of strength training, injury prevention,

and increased range of motion (ROM). An article raising similar points (Reams 2009) was published in this Journal. Suffice to say the issue has remained unresolved.

Recent discoveries concerning fascia, however, have seismically changed the conceptual ground upon which the controversy has been fought. Some of the most important of these are the discoveries that fascia contains 80% of the body's mechanoreceptors and that stretching and manual pressure heal injured cells. Fascia, rather than muscle, thus becomes the dominant factor in the body's load-distribution tensegrity structure. Armed with this understanding of the importance of fascia, especially its significant neural feature, the Fredericks enter the controversy concerning stretching and its benefits. Instead of discussing strength or range of motion of a singular muscle or joint, the Fredericks shift the argument to an old concept, flexibility, but with a new meaning: adaptability throughout the structure. Therapeutic stretching no longer aims at an isolated muscle or joint; to be truly effective and complete in eliminating a dysfunction or improving performance, a stretching modality must include the fascial chain as well.

FST assisted stretching techniques use traditional relax-contract methodologies similar to PNF (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation) but with less time and intensity per stretch to reflect the FST emphasis on fascia rather than the PNF emphasis on muscle. They list, in fact, eighteen differences between the PNF and the FST models. Like SI, FST sessions are distinguished by an initial assessment of a client's structure, posture, and nervous system tonus before tackling localized dysfunctions. Every stretch is then organized according to the geometric planes presented by Tom Myers in Anatomy Trains®, for example, the superficial front line (SFL), or the deep front line (DFL), etc. I should mention that straps are commonly used in FST for body stabilization during some stretches.

FST is a stand-alone modality with its own rigorous protocol of assessment and treatment. Though the language, concepts, and practices in the book will feel familiar to the SI community, there is no intent to communicate directly with the SI community. There is no reference to the 'Recipe' for example. The authors' goal is more ambitious: to infuse FST principles

and practices into mainstream manual modalities such as physical therapy. It is quite remarkable for FST, and a positive signpost for SI's future, that the Fredericks have been able to achieve this seamless integration between a mainstream clinical approach usually associated with physical therapy and the 'alternative' SI concepts and worldview.

As the pace of fascia research quickens and as its effects reverberate, we are witnessing the transposition of Dr. Rolf's ideas in ways that were unimaginable. If Rolf is watching all this, it must certainly be with some delight. As for the rest of us, well, we swim in the eddies of her genius.

* * * * *

Addendum

I would be remiss if I did not include some commentary on another fine effort by the Fredericks, *Stretch to Win*, published in 2006, eight years previous to *Fascial Stretch Therapy*. Whereas FST is aimed at the somatic professional, *Stretch to Win* is a self-help book for the general population, particularly the weekend warrior and amateur athletes interested in improving performance. Like FST, *Stretch to Win* is timely and contemporary, incorporating the new discoveries in fascial research of the past twenty years.

Though SI practitioners may tend to divide clients into those with pain issues and those that come for improved performance, pain and performance lie on the same continuum of restriction and immobility. Once the restriction is removed allowing 'normative' movement, pain dissipates and motion is restored. It is easy to forget that even high-level athletes, even professionals, have ongoing restrictions and compensations.

Stretch to Win is meaty, chock full of ideas that the Fredericks have developed in their practice of working with high-level athletes, most prominently Donovan McNabb, a former NFL quarterback. But best of all, *Stretch to Win* is built on the principles and concepts of SI. How comforting to be able to recommend a book on stretching to a client knowing that your sessions and the book's contents are completely aligned.

Though this is a how-to book for the semi-serious athlete, it can be adapted to any client who needs stretching – in other words, just about all of them. The second chapter, "Anatomy of Athletic Flexibility," is a wonderful and simple enough explanation

of the new science of fascia and SI concepts in educated layman's terms. Though the stretches in the book are common and familiar, their organizational framework is different, based on Tom Meyer's Anatomy Trains. The Fredericks' introduction of undulating stretching and the Stretch Wave, synchronizing breath and stretch, attempts to expand beyond typical local joint mobility to include respiration and the nervous system and to effect the body as a whole. The Fredericks' concept of stretching is anything but mechanical, no stretch and hold for thirty seconds. The heart of the book is a detailed self-evaluation of areas of restrictions and inflexibility and a resulting personalized stretching program for correction. As previously mentioned, the stretches are well-known but are organized on SI transmission lines such as Superficial Back Line (SBL), Superficial Front Line (SFL), etc., beginning with four 'core' stretches of hip flexors, gluteus complex, quadratus lumborum, and latissimus dorsi. The Fredericks thereby bring stretching to a holism usually deficient in typical programs.

Together, *Fascial Stretch Therapy* and *Stretch to Win* mark a significant contribution to the SI literature. While many in our community have called for decisive scientific experiments to prove the validity of our work, sometimes forgotten is the sheer weight of articles and books published in the past fifty years, which would carry perhaps as great a weight with the public – if people knew about them! Unfortunately, the SI world is still too fragmented to provide an access point of such information to the general population, a sort of clearing house for SI. In any case, the Fredericks' efforts bridge the mainstream and our increasingly popular little corner of the universe.

Bibliography

Reams, M. 2011 (Dec). "S-T-R-E-T-C-H-I-N-G." *Structural Integration: The Journal of the Rolf Institute*® 39(2)15-18.

Two Useful Books on Osteopathy

At the Still Point of the Turning World: The Art and Philosophy of Osteopathy by Robert Lever DO (Handspring Publishing 2013)

Osteopathy for the Over 50s: Maintaining Function and Treating Dysfunction by Nicette Sergueef DO and Kenneth Nelson DO (Handspring Publishing 2014)

Reviews by Allan Kaplan, Certified Advanced Rolfer™

Here are two significant books from Handspring Publishing, osteopathic books that are very different from each other. If one takes a continuum from technical to philosophical, the books would find their homes on opposite ends. But each is equally important in getting a complete perspective on holistic care, ostensibly from the osteopathic perspective. I say "ostensibly," because I found the knowledge in these books equally appropriate for Rolfers as for osteopaths. Both books are written by practitioners of the European osteopathic tradition, oriented toward manual therapy, versus the American allopathic approach, which makes them much more applicable to the manual practice of Rolwing® Structural Integration (SI).

As I read *At the Still Point of the Turning World: The Art and Philosophy of Osteopathy*, I kept mentally substituting "Rolwing SI" for "osteopathy" on nearly every page, and saying to myself, "Exactly! Rolwing SI looks at this the same way!" I found this slim book to be a valuable investigation into the essence of osteopathy as art, especially because its author has sought to distill it down to principles and concepts that are, coincidentally, easily applied to the practice of Rolwing SI, as well as other holistic approaches.

Osteopath Robert Lever has divided his observations into three parts, first giving an overview of osteopathy's background, principles, and speaking of structure and function. He talks about the body and its systems – corporeal, energetic, and lesional – framing it all within a global, holistic viewpoint of the person that really suggests thinking 'out of the box'. One of his influences, Rollin Becker DO, taught a melding of "clinical knowledge" with the body's "definitive state of knowing," and

that's the tack that Lever has taken with his book. After laying out the concepts, he delves into the art of the work, the context of the relationship, how to "read" the patient, use creativity and analysis, and how to open up to get beyond technique in order to align with the client's state. Finally, Lever shares his inner thoughts concerning the dynamic of client and practitioner on multiple levels – support, dependency, purpose, doubt, unknowing, transcendence – all factors that enter into the mix

At the Still Point of the Turning World: The Art and Philosophy of Osteopathy is a valuable treatment of the essence of the art. It is fascinating, and certainly thought-provoking, leaving one with plenty of questions, and stimulating introspection, evaluation of the modality and relationship with the client, and the way of approaching the work to have it manifest. It's well-researched, eminently thoughtful, even profound, with simple conclusions. He's speaking of holism throughout: throughout the book, the body, and the relationship. It's a deceptively complex book, but conversational and approachable despite being deeply contemplated with layers of interwoven ideas. Yet, it flows like a well-composed lecture or skillful, engaging conversation.

Lever traces the questions of what we're looking for, what we're doing, how we're doing it, versus the step-by-step of technique; the questions of attitude, history, essence versus a manual of how-tos. This book is not a textbook, and supports development of the practitioner's creativity and analysis. Lever stresses the idea of disengaging from technique and basing the treatment (or session) on the practitioner's skills and knowledge from a place of "stillness" and reflection, where a true connection with the appropriate path of the session will manifest. I am reminded of Dr. Rolf's own book once more, in that one reading cannot possibly do either book justice; many general ideas will be introduced – some even well-grasped – but only through repeated visits will the real depths of the message be realized.

From the opposite pole of the continuum comes *Osteopathy for the Over 50s: Maintaining Function and Treating Dysfunction*, for which I waited with great anticipation. And the wait was well worth it. This book is more the textbook or reference that Lever's book is not, and holistic in its content in its own fashion. More than a third of its