

The following piece was written in 1992 after Mara, Lisa and Lilica returned from a working conference in Heraklion, Crete, where preparations were being made for the 1995 United Nations Conference for Women in Beijing, China.



PARTNERSHIP-IN-MOTION: ROSEN METHOD MOVEMENT

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in conversation with Marion Rosen, Lisa Thompson, and Lilica Anderson



Innovative, wholistic health care systems today are realizing that at least as important as the heroic interventions now possible through the advanced technologies of surgery and drugs is the activation of the individual's own inner powers of self-healing. It is this principle of healing that is central to the work of Marion Rosen. While focussing on the muscles, breath, and emotions, Rosenwork concentrates on the inner physical and spiritual resources of the client for self-healing.

Cooperation, partnership, symbiosis – these have been key to the evolution of humanity, and have taken many diverse forms. For example, in the ancient Greek world, both spiritual and scientific powers were combined in the arts of healing. Illness was thought to occur if a person had strayed from the path destined for them by the divinities; the goddesses and gods were invoked to help a person recover from illness. Prayers, healing waters, and healing dreams were all central to an individual's physical and spiritual recovery. In their dreaming, a sick person hoped to receive a visitation from a divinity who would reveal to them their life's purpose or divine destiny. It was then incumbent upon the patient to honor the deity by following the guidance of the dream and by carrying out an appropriate task or mission.

Marion Rosen as a young Jewish woman escaped from Nazi Germany and fled to Sweden and then to the United States, where she continued her work as a physical therapist. She sees a direct connection between her work and the work for social justice and peace in the world. Marion continues a very active life as head of the Rosen Institute in Berkeley, California, where she teaches movement and bodywork classes and maintains a regular bodywork practice. Several times a year she flies to Sweden to teach workshops in Scandinavia. Rosen Method bodywork and movement classes are being offered in every-widening circles, not only in different regions of the United States, but also in Canada, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Holland, Germany, France, and Russia.

Marion relates something from her experience of teaching Rosenwork in Russia to doctors and nurses at a center for the treatment of alcohol and drug addiction. "The exciting thing in Russia is that it was the medical profession that got interested in it. Our work was well received at a hospital. The amount of love that was created was unbelievable. It happened after I worked on the first client, and he said, 'I feel that your hands are touching my heart.' There was an incredible shift in the whole room; the doctors and nurses began to look at the work and to approach it very differently. I was only there for four days. One of the doctors said, 'I've never been in a room where so much love came out of people ... where they were that loving to each other!' When we left, they showered us in presents and in manifestations of love. It was really, really wonderful. And the lovely thing was to see them be with each other in a loving way, people who had not talked very much to each other, who became so aware of each other, so accepting and loving.

"Our work is meant to help people in understanding one another rather than in fighting each other. To create understanding. Greater acceptance. Greater awareness of people. And to spread this in the world – for the greater good of humanity. It is part of a bigger movement, a bigger development that is going on in the world towards peace and understanding. Simply put, I like peace. I like people loving each other. I like people not building guns, but rather providing food for everyone. I like people going in and preventing disease, or famine. Rosenwork is a small effort toward such goals."

In 1992, I was very fortunate to be asked by Riane Eisler of the Partnership International Network and Margarita Papandreu of Women for Mutual Security to be one of the key organizers for the First International Minoan Celebration of Partnership in Crete, in early October. This working conference brought together 500 peace and human rights activists, artists, and feminists of many diverse interests from around the world. For a week I lived what I felt was an ideal life: beginning every day with a Rosen movement class, followed by a working breakfast and then workshops, a 2-hour lunch break that usually included swimming in the Aegean, afternoon work sessions, a leisurely dinner, an arts event, then dancing and socializing until late into the evening.

Each morning of the week during the Celebration of Partnership Conference (from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.), people had the opportunity to join a circle of movement exercises, near to the sea in the bright clear light of early morning. It was led by Lisa Thompson and Lilica Anderson, and assisted by myself. I didn't realize that I would later go on to take the Rosen Movement teacher training and begin teaching classes as well.

Before I went to Crete, Marion explained to me her goals for the Rosen Movement work: "When we give a movement class, we really are aware of each person, what their body looks like, and we design something for them, so that without

their knowing it, it makes it possible for them to do the particular movement that before was limited for them. And that seems very helpful for the person. What it does to them spiritually I would not know, except that they keep a more open mind; they seem to be unstuck. And in their lives, they go on being involved in life, being interested, doing something or other that helps other people toward progress. Even when they get up towards their eighties, it's not something that stops with them. So there is an aliveness in them that gets spoken to, and that brings about this change, or that brings about the perpetuation of life – instead of the dying while they are still alive. It is a feeling of freedom and of caring."

Lisa, Lilica, and I shared a special excitement in being able to do this work in the natural environment of Crete. In a conversation at my home following the conference, we shared our evolving understanding and articulation of Rosenwork.

Lisa: "In Crete we are able to interact with the earth, the sky, the sea. Being out early in the morning in the sunshine, nearby the beach and the sea, with the waves sounding, and looking up into the blue sky – all the beauty of the environment means so much!"

Mara: "You come into whatever else you are doing from a different place, once you have connected to the beauty of nature."

Lilica: "When I'm in Crete, something special happens anyway. It is like you can feel things growing. To me, there is something about the Cretan earth – there's a sense of fertility to it. Arid as it is, things start popping up, bright colors, there is a strength and aliveness to it all. Perhaps it is the light that is the more significant part of Crete."

Mara: "When you do movement in a place like Crete, you pick up the magic of the openness of having the sky above you, walking through gardens of flowers, smelling the air – it creates a magic – you are ready for everything."

Lisa: "Rosen Method Movement is an awareness training for becoming more and more aware of how this body works for you with the least strain and effort. It encourages us to create a playful, working partnership between our body, mind, spirit, and the breath. We release old patterns and habits of moving in the world, and allow ourselves to

find more natural, flowing, and enjoyable ways of being in our body and relating to other people. Rosen movement gives us the opportunity to experience being centered and grounded in our own body, while working with a partner. We allow ourselves to use the inner impulses of our original natures to experience new delight and joy in our aliveness."

Lilica: "With these movement exercises, as with partnership, first it is important to take the time to get to know each other. You have to become aware of how your body works, where the limitations are, and what the possibilities are. As we begin to know our bodies, we find not only where the limitations are, and when it wants to rest, but also where we enjoy the movement and how we begin to change as the ease begins to come into our relationship with our body. The freedom that comes into our breathing will also bring more of a feeling of freedom into our minds."

Lisa: "In Rosen Movement, healing manifests itself as a reclaiming of movement. The body begins to move again, to become more at home in the body, to regain some of the physical freedom of early childhood. Places long frozen, that have been held unconsciously, begin to release."

Lisa continues: "We begin by limbering up the muscles, the joints, the breathing – this is partnering with oneself, with one's breath and one's body. It's about learning how to be very good to yourself. Then after a while we work in twos, working in partnership with another person, helping each other to stretch and reach a larger range of motion, a deeper place of relaxation, to have each one in turn be held and helped, and to return this to one's partner. In the paired partnering, we take the time to really become aware of another person. It's a give and take, a giving and receiving. It's almost like allowing the other person to let themselves be there, so you can stretch further, or lift up taller, because you are being given that additional support. In this independent world where people think they are not supposed to be needed or needing, this experience of support, without intrusion, can be a very powerful feeling. Finally the partnership expands into a circle. The partnership grows!"

Lilica: "Until we can learn to be good to ourselves, caring from the heart, we won't be very good to others. Somehow in growing

up we take on habits of doing a lot of protecting of ourselves – maybe of feeling that we need to work all the time in order to survive, or that we need to be self-critical as well as critical of others – all these habits can become tiresome in us and make life harder than it really needs to be. An important way we help people is by discovery of movement that comes out of ease and that naturally becomes enjoyable."

Mara: "Often then, one's own life becomes easier, more natural, more enjoyable. We are freer to live life more fully, in harmony with ourselves and with others."

In addition to teaching Rosen Movement classes, Lisa, Lilica and myself are also Rosen Bodywork practitioners. The bodywork and movement work go hand-in-glove. Both have the goal of facilitating greater physical and emotional freedom. Both have been of enormous benefit in my life, and I am profoundly grateful to be able to pass along this way of becoming a good partner to oneself and to others to create not only more ease and freedom but also inner and outward harmony and creative aliveness.



TIDBITS by Ms. Z
ROSEN: The key that opens the door to the possibilities that lie within one's body, mind and spirit.